

# Saipan Tribune

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## INSIDE



### Industry Leader

After operating locally for over 17 years, Guangdong has become one of the biggest hardware stores in the CNMI. With China becoming a manufacturing base for various industries, Guangdong's advantage is that it could get its supplies directly from the Asian country.

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### Mini iPod

Apple Computer Inc.'s newest iPod digital music player, debuting in February for \$249, will be a half-inch thick and roughly the size of a business card.

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### Madonna Says

The Material Girl hopes people pay attention to her latest offstage act: endorsing Wesley Clark for president. Madonna, who announced her support for the retired general before Christmas, posted a letter Wednesday on her eponymous Web site urging others to follow her.

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## Norton, US lawmakers to visit NMI

By JAYVEE VALLEJERA  
ASSISTANT EDITOR

Interior Secretary Gayle Norton, together with a Congressional delegation led by Calif. Rep. Richard Pombo, will be arriving on Saipan Thursday next week for a familiarization tour of the CNMI, according to Gov. Juan N. Babauta.

This will be Norton's first visit to the Commonwealth since being appointed secretary. Pombo is chairman of the House Resources Committee.

Besides Norton and Pombo, the delegation will include Guam Delegate Madeline Bordallo and Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Interior David B. Cohen. Babauta said a couple of other House members may also be with the delegation, although this has not been confirmed yet.

"They will be arriving here on the 15<sup>th</sup>, staying through the 16<sup>th</sup> and leaving on the morning of the 17<sup>th</sup>," Babauta told reporters yesterday.

The governor confirmed that, once the delegation arrives, there will be a press briefing, to be announced at a later date.

"We are putting together a tentative schedule for the [congressional delegation], working together with the Washington Rep's Office and the field representative here from DOI, Jeff Schorr. We are coordinating the different activities that we think the co-del [congressional delegation] will be participating in," said the governor.

He said his administration is looking forward to the opportunity of showing Norton and Pombo around and the chance to talk to them about several local issues that he would like to bring



Norton



Pombo

up with the delegation.

Public information officer Peter Callaghan described the visit as a

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## Heinz: 13th House was no rubber stamp

By JAYVEE VALLEJERA  
ASSISTANT EDITOR

The 13th House of Representatives held a final session yesterday morning, with House Speaker Heinz S. Hofschneider praising the lower chamber for achieving the difficult feat of being an entity unto itself despite being identified with the same political party as the Babauta administration and the Senate.

Hofschneider said that, although the House was dominated by lawmakers who belong to the same party—Republican Party—as the Babauta administration and the Senate leadership, it was able to avoid falling into the trap of being a mere rubber stamp.

"I am proud, so proud of this House because you made your decision and stood by it, not out of disrespect, not out of a

See HEINZ on Page 8



LIBERTY DONES

Gov. Juan N. Babauta, center, leads the ribbon cutting ceremony for the \$5.2-million Youth Detention and Correctional facility in Kagman Thursday afternoon. In photo from left: Saipan mayor Juan B. Tudela (partly hidden), DCCA Secretary Juan L. Babauta, Washington Rep. Pete A. Tenorio, the governor, House speaker Heinz Hofschneider, DPW Secretary John Reyes, and Attorney General Pam Brown.

## \$5.2M youth detention facility formally opens

By LIBERTY DONES  
REPORTER

Government officials and community members formally marked yesterday the long-awaited opening of a \$5.2-million Kagman youth detention facility—considered to be the best of its kind in the region.

The state-of-the-art federally funded detention, which began construction about

three years ago, can house 48 youth offenders, but it can expand to accommodate more individuals, according to Department of Community and Cultural Affairs Secretary Juan L. Babauta.

"This facility will allow us to ease overcrowding, provide a more structured program...and will provide safe and secure treatment to young offenders," he said.

The complex is fully air-conditioned and is equipped with a library, two

classrooms, a gymnasium, a basketball court, and other recreational areas.

Authorities said necessary security systems are in place to prevent escape and other illegal acts within the institution.

The facility has a sophisticated main control room, which consists of multi-screen monitoring cameras that can check on all activities inside and outside the building.

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## 'Saipan betel nuts are free of fungus'

By JOHN RAVELO  
REPORTER

The betel nut fungus that is reportedly threatening to wipe out the industry on Guam has not found its way to the Northern Marianas yet, although an agricultural official said the spread is possible.

Isidoro T. Cabrera, agricultural consultant to the Northern Marianas College's Cooperative Research,

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# Visitor arrivals up for 3<sup>rd</sup> straight month

By JOHN RAVELO  
REPORTER

The number of visitors who entered the CNMI last November increased compared with the same period last year—the third consecutive month that showed positive growth in tourist statistics.

At the same time, MVA managing director Jonas Ogren is projecting a remarkable 325-percent growth for the Chinese market this fiscal year—provided that its government grants the CNMI “Approved Destination Status.”

Although the total growth for the month was slight at 1.27 percent, the actual tally surpassed October’s 38,512 total. The MVA recorded some

42,496 visitors last month.

The November figures are based on the MVA’s preliminary report distributed to the agency’s members yesterday during a bi-annual membership meeting at the Hotel Nikko Saipan.

The MVA is also anticipating an improvement in CNMI’s tourism this fiscal year, with more airline seats becoming available to ferry tourists from the CNMI’s premier market, Japan.

Earlier, the MVA cited Northwest Airlines’ inauguration of direct flights between Saipan and Nagoya, Japan, which is the CNMI’s second largest source of Japanese tourists. It also cited the new daily services from Haneda and resumption of flights from Kansai by JALWAYS.

The Japanese market remained strong in November, posting a 22-percent increase compared with November 2002’s 26,772. Some 32,781 visited the islands last month.

Even though global events such as the Iraq war and the SARS outbreak impacted on international travel, the MVA claimed that the CNMI fared better compared with other destinations as

regards the Japanese market.

The MVA said its aggressive marketing campaign of the CNMI resulted in free multimillion-dollars worth of exposure to different

markets, including Japan.

“During the period, the CNMI posted declines in arrivals but was not dramatic compared with other destinations,” said MVA’s Judy Torres.

cbcruz

hana

conwood

movie station

mcdo



# CUC gives \$60K to Water Task Force

By LIBERTY DONES  
REPORTER

The majority of the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. board agreed yesterday to give some \$60,000 as operations funding for the newly created CNMI Water Task Force in FY 2004.

The board voted 5-2 in favor of the funding release, which is actually a 50-50 sharing with the Executive Branch.

This after the task force, chaired by Lt. Gov. Diego T. Benavente, earlier lowered its funding request from over \$250,000 to \$120,000 with CUC.

The task force originally submitted a \$510,400 budget requirement for its “war room” on Capitol Hill. It covered supplies and equipment purchase, vehicles, janitorial services, travel, and personnel salaries.

The amount would be shouldered equally by the Executive Branch and the CUC as embodied in a memorandum of agreement between the task force and the CUC board.

Based on the proposal, task force program manager Don Smith would get \$80,000; liaison officer, \$65,000; and two special project assistants, \$92,000.

After a series of discussions, the budget request to CUC was limited to operations, which amounts to \$120,000 a year.

This no longer covers any

funding for two vehicles that would cost \$48,000.

The task force, instead of hiring an off-island consultant, had opted to hire a manager to address the water problem in the CNMI.

Benavente earlier said that the current water crisis is not a result of the lack of water but of poor management.

The task force “war room” aims to ensure a day-to-day focus on the panel’s overall goal of providing a 24-hour water supply to Saipan within two years.

The war room, located in a government building across the Election Commission on Capitol Hill, is headed by Smith as the manager, Patrick Guerrero as the CUC’s technical representative, and Felix Sablan, who is Benavente’s chief of staff.

The three are currently paid by their respective agencies.

The task force said the war room would exist until the government has achieved its goal of providing a 24-hour water supply on the entire island of Saipan.

A major focus of the task force is to solve the leak problem, install an accurate metering system, and construct more additional water storage tanks.

It earlier cited that about half of the CUC’s 10 million gallon daily water production is lost due to leaks.



## Four minors arrested for disturbance

Authorities arrested four minors in Chalan Kiya in the wee hours of Wednesday morning after residents complained of disturbance at the area, police reported yesterday.

Police department spokesperson Sgt. Tom Blas, Jr. said the four juveniles were arrested around 2am in Chalan Kiya in connection with complaints of disturbing the peace, and minor consuming of alcoholic beverages. They were also charged for allegedly resisting arrest.

Investigation disclosed that police officers were dispatched to the south portion of the former Whispering Palms due to complaints of a possible riot in the area.

Responding police officers found the four minors on the roadway. They were found to have been involved in an earlier fight. Police also reported strong odor of alcoholic beverages emanating from the suspects. All minors were placed under arrest but the suspects refused to cooperate with officers on the scene. All suspects were booked and detained at the correctional facility. *(Edith G. Alejandro)*

## Two women nabbed for assault

Police arrested two women who were reportedly involved in an assault incident in Chalan Kanoa Wednesday morning.

Arrested were Jian Lan Xiong, 31 and Rulong Su, 30, both of Chalan Kanoa. The two were charged with assault and battery and assault with dangerous weapon, according to police department spokesperson Sgt. Tom Blas, Jr.

Preliminary investigation revealed that a police officer was flagged down by a resident in Chalan Kanoa and reported roadside fighting. Witnesses said the two suspects were seen fighting near the Bharti’s Store.

During the commotion, one of the suspects hit the other woman with an object. The cause of the assault is still being investigated. Xiong and Su traded charges against each other. Both suspects were brought to the Adult Correctional facility in Susupe. *(Edith G. Alejandro)*



PICTURE TIME: 1:00 A.M., JANUARY 8, 2004  
Western North Pacific between Equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A near-equatorial trough extends from 1n130e eastward through a weak circulation centered near 3n154e to eq180. Scattered showers associated with the circulation are located south of Chuuk and Pohnpei between 1n and 5n from 150e to 158e. A surface trough stretching from 8n173e to eq180 is generating scattered showers east of the Marshall Islands within 150 miles of the trough axis.



**SAIPAN AND TINIAN**  
Partly cloudy with isolated showers.  
**Winds:** Northeast at 20 mph.



**GUAM AND ROTA**  
Partly cloudy with isolated showers.  
**Winds:** Northeast at 20 mph.



**PALAU**  
Mostly cloudy with scattered showers.  
**Winds:** Northeast 20 kt.



**POHNPEI**  
Mostly cloudy with scattered showers.  
**Winds:** Northeast at 20 kt.



**YAP AND ULITHI**  
Mostly cloudy with scattered showers.  
**Winds:** Northeast 20 kt.



**KOSRAE**  
Mostly cloudy with scattered showers.  
**Winds:** Northeast at 20 kt.



**CHUUK**  
Mostly cloudy with scattered showers.  
**Winds:** Northeast at 20 kt.



**MAJURO**  
Mostly cloudy with scattered showers.  
**Winds:** East at 15 kt.

	CITY	FORECAST	HIGH	LOW
	Auckland	Rain	75F (24C)	66F (19C)
	Beijing	Partly Cloudy	38F (3C)	20F (-7C)
	Hong Kong	Partly Cloudy	71F (22C)	60F (16C)
	Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	83F (28C)	68F (20C)
	London, England	Rain	49F (9C)	39F (4C)
	Los Angeles	Partly Cloudy	71F (22C)	51F (11C)
	Manila	Cloudy	85F (29C)	67F (19C)
	Melbourne	Partly Cloudy	61F (16C)	44F (7C)
	Miami	Partly Cloudy	77F (25C)	61F (16C)
	New York City	Cloudy	24F (-4C)	11F (-12C)
	Osaka	Partly Cloudy	38F (3C)	19F (-7C)
	Paris	Rain	43F (6C)	35F (2C)
	Pusan	Partly Cloudy	42F (6C)	30F (-1C)
	Rome	Cloudy	48F (9C)	38F (3C)
	Salem, Oregon	Rain	50F (10C)	40F (4C)
	San Francisco	Cloudy	60F (16C)	49F (9C)
	Seoul	Sunny	34F (1C)	20F (-7C)
	Tokyo, Japan	Sunny	41F (5C)	28F (-2C)
	Washington, DC	Cloudy	35F (2C)	24F (-4C)

# Paras, DPH sign payment agreement

By **LIBERTY DONES**  
REPORTER

The CNMI government and Paras Enterprises finally signed a payment agreement to settle over \$200,000 owed by the Department of Public Health for nursing personnel services.

DPH Secretary James U. Hofschneider said the agreement was signed yesterday morning.

This after both parties agreed earlier this week to finalize their payment terms in view of the DPH's shift to direct hiring of nursing staff effective Jan. 1, 2004.

The department owes agencies, which supplied the Commonwealth Health Center nursing personnel for over six years, some \$600,000.

Meantime, authorities said a consensual transfer agreement with Paras is no longer needed since its contracts with employees provide that contract termination or expiration goes with Paras' contract termination with CHC.

It means that Paras' remaining employees, totaling 38,



Hofschneider

can freely transfer to CHC as "expiration transfers."

Paras and other agencies' contracts with CHC practically ended on Dec. 31, 2003 but transfer negotiations dragged along pending the settlement of the government's debt with the companies and the lack of funded FTEs or positions at the department.

The signing of the payment term came after Lt. Governor Diego T. Benavente's recent meeting with Paras, Department of Finance, and Department of Public Health officials in efforts

to solve issues surrounding the employees' transfer.

On Jan. 2, the finance department released \$100,000 each to Paras and Saipan Employment Agency Services as partial payment.

The government terminated its contracts with agencies following its decision to shift to direct hiring beginning this year. The direct hiring would result in the government incurring some \$3 million in additional costs a year.

Despite the budget increase, the government is convinced that direct hiring is the best way to go to boost employee morale and prevent frequent turnover of staff.

The direct hiring aims to implement a uniform pay for all nursing staff, which means an increase of the salary of those who previously worked for agencies.

The government said it would source the additional funding needs from lapsed, unexpended, and unobligated funds, using the governor's reprogramming authority.

# Young ladies vie for Miss NMI crown

By **EDITH G. ALEJANDRO**  
REPORTER

The Northern Marianas Beauty Pageant Association will present next week the candidates to the 2004 Miss Northern Marianas pageant in preparation for the March 13, 2004 competition.

NMBPA secretary Carmen Sablan said, however, that the organization is still accepting candidates to the 2004 Miss CNMI pageant, even as seven young ladies have already signed up for the competition.

Sablan said the candidates would be presented to the public next week at the Hotel Nikko Saipan. Candidates from Tinian and Rota would be introduced at a later date.

"We are still encouraging qualified applicants to apply and submit all necessary documents for the pageant. We will accept application up to the end of this month," Sablan added.

The NMBPA hopes to get 12 candidates for this year's competition. This year's Miss NMI winners—Miss NMI-Universe Kimberly Reyes, Miss NMI-International Nancy Ripple, and Miss NMI-South

Pacific Olivia Tebuteb—would transfer their crowns to the next ambassadress of goodwill.

Pageant organizers said that interested young ladies must meet the NMBPA requirements to qualify: Candidates must be 18 years old and not more than 25 years old on February 1, 2004; must be a U.S. citizen and possesses a U.S. passport, or have lived or domiciled in the CNMI for at least two consecutive years; and has never given birth.

To become an official candidate, one must submit a completed application, which will then be reviewed and will go through a screening process.

The candidates who would be chosen as the next Miss Northern Marianas will represent the Commonwealth in the international pageants: Miss Universe, Miss International, and Miss South Pacific.

The association and the idea of promoting the islands through local beauties was a brainchild of then Marianas Visitors Bureau Managing Director J. M. Guerrero who now serves as an advisor to the NMBPA.

Application forms to the 2004 Miss Northern Marianas

pageant can be availed at the NMBPA office. For additional information contact NMBPA president Bill Bezzant at 235-0563/236-2902.

# Woman assaults man

Who says that women are the weaker sex?

In a criminal case filed at the Superior Court, a man accused a woman of attacking him more than a year ago.

CNMI chief prosecutor David Hutton filed the charges against 26-year-old Alma Meyer Wednesday. The charges include assault and battery, disturbing the peace, resisting arrest and criminal mischief.

Meyer's alleged victim was Karl Meyer, but the criminal information did not indicate their relationship.

The alleged assault happened on Dec. 8, 2002 on Saipan, Hutton said. The woman allegedly attempted to impede her arrest by police.

Hutton also lodged a criminal mischief charge against the woman for allegedly damaging a videocamera. *(John Ravelo)*

goldsgym

nikko



# Opinion

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## EDITORIAL

### Gore's Game

**T**here goes Al Gore again. Remaking himself. Remaking the Democratic Party. Remaking America. Or so he says.

The former Democratic nominee for president shook up the 2004 Democratic presidential race by endorsing Howard Dean for the nomination. Gore's blessing gives the former Vermont governor, who has been running as an insurgent, the patina of support from the party establishment. And it solidifies Dean's position as the front-runner for the nomination, as unlikely as that may seem.

Does that mean the race is over? Not so fast! Not when there hasn't been a vote cast yet. There's too much about Dean that isn't known. And it is ridiculously presumptive of the media, us included, to award the nomination before any real Democratic voters have been heard from. Let's wait for Iowa, New Hampshire and then all the big states to weigh in.

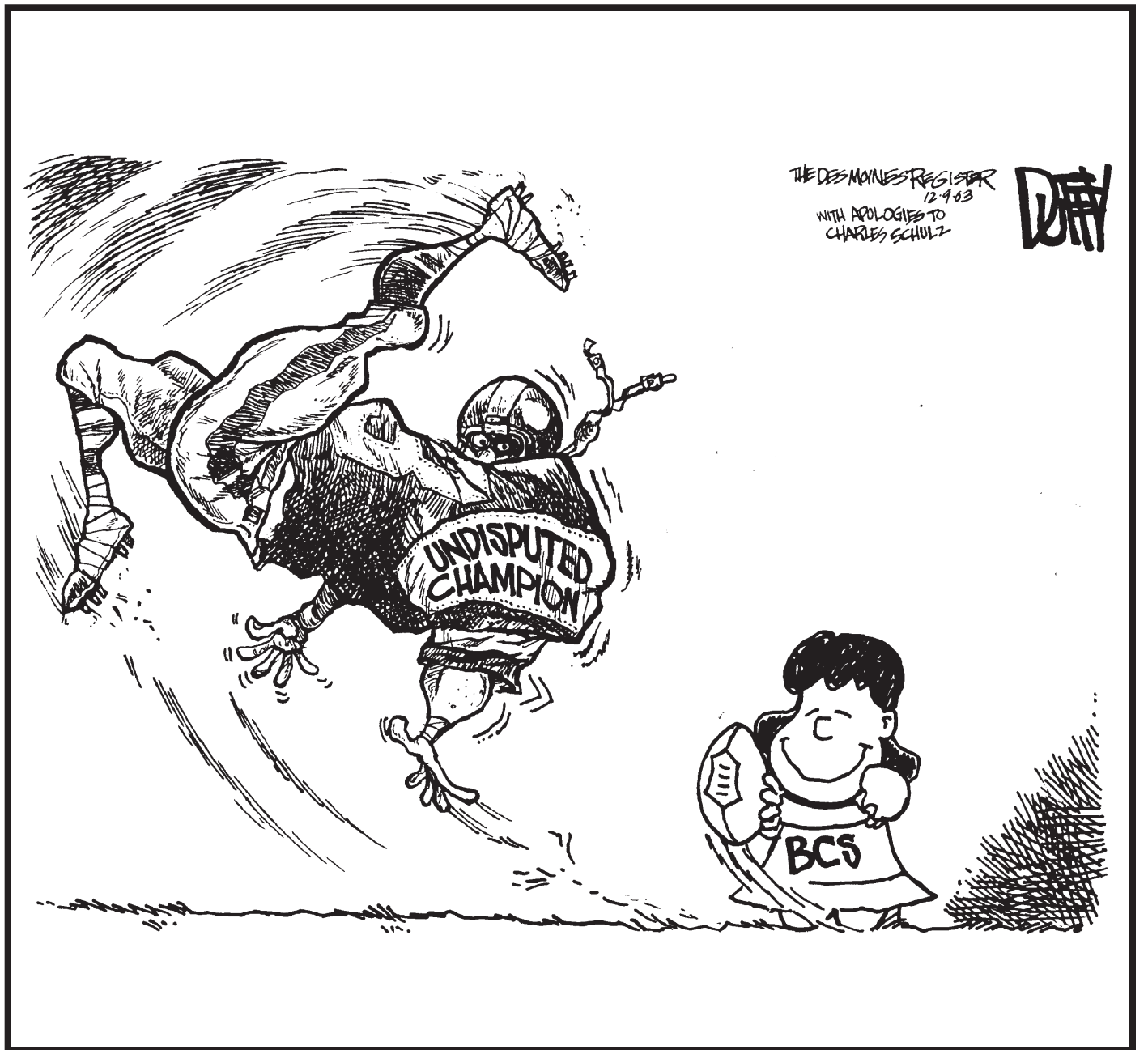
Still, Gore's announcement in the city yesterday was a stunner. Insiders say Gore, who models himself a futurist, was taken with Dean's New Age campaign, especially his use of the Internet to connect with young voters. And Gore, the former vice president, agreed with Dean's early opposition to the war in Iraq.

But while Gore's endorsement will help Dean's candidacy gain a certain credibility, Gore is a somewhat tarnished figure who has grown smaller since he lost the contested election to George W. Bush in 2000. One of the things that hurt Gore the most was the sense that he was constantly "remaking" himself, changing from blue suits to brown, from new Democrat to old. There was a sense of unguineness about Gore, which was not necessarily fair but still hurt him politically. Now he's saying the party has to "remake" itself.

What's his game? Some people were upset that Gore didn't even bother to notify his 2000 running mate, Sen. Joe Lieberman of Connecticut, that he was endorsing Dean. It's legitimate to ask how Gore could have chosen Lieberman to be the man to run the nation if anything happened to him and now bypass Lieberman for a man with no Washington experience.

Maybe Gore wants to pick up the New Age voting base that Dean has attracted and use it himself for a run in 2008 if Bush is re-elected. Remake or no, it's still all about politics.

Newsday



## Nothing beats a direct flight

**F**or Filipinos—and other members of the community who travel between the Northern Marianas and the Philippines, Continental Airlines' decision to start serving the Saipan-Manila route again is a welcome development. It practically shortens the flying time, thus, making it a stress-free process.

Majority of us have our own personal encounters with a layover—either on Guam or in Seoul, South Korea. And more often than not, it is more straining than fun, no matter how big the airport is or how good the shops are, and how short the layover time is.

I have personal encounters with a layover that is longer than the actual trip itself. I still unfortunately remember strolling around the Guam International Airport for 10 grueling hours when I was once sent to Palau for an assignment. I was literally trapped inside the Guam airport because I didn't have a U.S. visa then to allow me entry into the island-territory.

Just this year, I had to wait 12 backbreaking hours inside South Korea's Incheon International Airport when I attended—together with journalists from all over Asia—a roundtable discussion on migration issues in Bangkok, Thailand.

My Palau and Thailand trips are not what you would say a regular destination among most of us, especially Filipino nonresident workers in the CNMI who mostly touch base once every year. But this year's suspension of the Transit Without Visa program forced a big number of us away from the usual Saipan-Guam-Manila flights offered by Continental Airlines into Asiana Airlines' Saipan-Incheon-Manila service, or Northwest Airlines' Saipan-Japan-Manila route.

There's nothing wrong with stopping over Incheon or Narita on our way to the Philippines but there are also some factors to consider. It's still cheap to take Asiana's Saipan-Incheon-Manila flight but the route practically lengthens the traveling time: 2 hours advance check-in plus 3.5 hours flying time from Saipan to South Korea plus 2 hours layover in Incheon plus about 3 hours flying time from Seoul to Manila equals about 10 exhausting hours of traveling.

Yet still, many travelers put more weight on the extra money they would save by sacrificing a little time strolling around South Korea's gorgeous Incheon airport, with all the fascinating retail shops

By ALDWIN R. FAJARDO

The views expressed are strictly that of the author.  
Fajardo is the editor of the Saipan Tribune.



and food establishments sprawling inside it.

Northwest also offers a very tempting package for Manila-bound travelers but it doesn't seem to suit most Filipino workers' travel desires due to strict visa requirements implemented by the Japanese government. Still, a possible visit to the Tokyo Disneyland is still a major thing to consider.

A direct service between Saipan and Manila is the best solution to Philippine-bound passengers' traveling dilemma. Bottom line is, nothing beats a direct service, especially if the destination is only about three hours away from the point of origin.

■ ■ ■ ■ ■

We are now in the process of reviewing the accomplishments of those who have made it to the final list of nominees for the annual Saipan Tribune Person of the Year. The Tribune gives this award each year—now on its fifth year—to recognize the efforts and commitment of those who untiringly and consistently do their part in making the CNMI a better place to live in.

Like last year, we will be naming one Person of the Year for 2003 and nine honorable mentions. Nominees are judged based on the impacts of their contributions or efforts on the lives or overall well-being of the people or the community they intended to serve.

Among those who have been recognized in the last five years were: HIV/AIDS educator Moses Saburo (1999); Ports Authority executive director Carlos Salas and then-board chairman Roman S. Palacios, and then-House Speaker Ben Fitial (2000); David Borja, former principal of Hopwood Junior High School (2001); and Rota Mayor Benjamin T. Manglona for 2002.

Who will it be this year?



## The adult GPA

**W**hether it's the Commonwealth seeking to float \$40 million in bonds, or your brother in law trying to finance a car, it seems like every entity and living being on the planet has got a credit rating and credit score appended to their name.

Oh, yuck, credit scores. Does anyone really want to hear about those?

Well, the good citizens of the Commonwealth should, given that the ghost of the Union Bank of California may be haunting your financial records. UBOC is long gone from our shores, but if you held a UBOC credit card, you may have been subjected to a little surprise. At issue is the fact that UBOC actually transferred some or all (I've been told it was all) of its credit card business to another company.

The transfer actually pre-dated UBOC's exodus from our fair shores, and the two events were entirely unrelated.

If you ever dealt with UBOC, you'll recall that they were a prime bank, a quality outfit. UBOC, is a corporate cousin of the Bank of Tokyo Mitsubishi, and the Japanese focus on excellent customer service was certainly a hallmark of UBOC's operations. First Hawaiian Bank, as you know, picked up UBOC's action here and retained many of the excellent staffers, which was good news for the community.

On the less happy end of things, when UBOC slipped its credit card business to another company, things didn't end so well. You have to be very careful who you deal with in the credit card industry, since not all companies are honorable.

As for any former UBOC customers, then, you should review your records carefully. If you have a credit card that has "Union Bank of California" stamped on the front, it may not really be issued by UBOC. Yikes! If you find some unknown company lurking in the background on that one, I'd advise closing the account immediately and taking your business to another place. This is a "consumer alert" from me, and I'll be happy to compile reader feedback on this note, so feel free to e-mail me any experience you may have had along these lines. I have uncovered some disturbing information on the topic and my interest is piqued, big time.

Since I'm on the credit topic, I'll mention that American Express, as well as at least one credit reporting agency, is selling a credit monitoring service. These guys eyeball your credit activity on a daily basis, in order to prevent identity theft or other monkey business from messing with your records. I paid 99 buckaroos to enroll in the service for one year. Cheapskate that I am, I think it's worth dropping a C-note on the deal.

Credit records have become the Grade Point Average of adult life. It's worth keeping an eye on your files.

Meanwhile, I'm gathering the writing files for next year; we've got a lot of ground to cover. The Commonwealth economy will be the hot topic, of course. And—drum roll—yours truly is preparing to launch a new business that you'll be hearing about, which is why I've been in meetings with attorneys this week and have not answered anyone's calls or e-mails. So much for goofing off during the holidays. In fact, I get so worn out planning for 2004 already that I'm wishing that 2003 would last a couple of months longer. I guess that Santa can't deliver more time to even the best of boys and girls.



**By ED STEPHENS**  
*Ed Stephens, Jr. is an economist and columnist for the Saipan Tribune.*  
"Ed4Saipan@yahoo.com"

## Some soulful memories in papa's bag

**Y**ou had to take off your shoes. No shoes on the gym floor. No sneakers, either. Not if you were going to do the James Brown during a pep rally at my high school. And during those years, from 1966 to 1968, whenever the band broke into, say, "Papa's Got a Brand New Bag," you were going to do the James Brown. You had to.

If Martin Luther King Jr. was telling us to stride toward freedom, Brown was showing us how to glide toward it. And of course, we all wanted to arrive in style.

Unlike the twist or the funky chicken, the James Brown required both frenzy and precision—qualities that represented the tensions of our times as we moved from the regimented life of Old South segregation (my school was Booker T. Washington High in Shreveport, La.) toward a world where you could finally say it loud, "I'm Black and I'm Proud!"

The Kennedy Center Honors that Brown received Sunday brought back those memories.

"We honor one of the most influential musicians of the last 50 years," Kennedy Center Chairman James A. Johnson said of Brown. That would put the onset of Brown's influence pretty close to the start of my life.

Last year, I read a profile of Brown in the New Yorker magazine that led me to the conclusion that given Soul Brother No. 1's troubles with the drug PCP and the police, his struggles with past wives, mistresses, girlfriends and others, along with the fallout from some peculiar political stands, he was lucky to be alive.

"Race, poverty and exclusion were the defining features of James Brown's childhood world, and he might easily have seen himself as cursed," Philip Gourevitch wrote in the New Yorker. "Instead, he seems to have understood himself to be a free agent—denied the comforts of a conventional home, but also spared its constraints—with no choice but to fight for emancipation however he could."

Did that explain Brown's weird behavior—or how he survived in spite of it? Did too much adulation and exaltation lead him to believe that he could do no wrong? A Look magazine article in 1969 declared: "James Brown is a new important leader. His constituency dwarfs Stokely Carmichael's and the late Dr. Martin Luther King's." Did such twisted statements go to his head?

All I know is that during adolescence, I'd break out in a cold

**"With each repetition, he invested the monosyllable with a different emotional accent and stress—prayer and pride, impatience and invitation—and although there was ache in his voice, he did not sound like a man pleading so much as commanding what was rightfully his."**

**By COURTLAND MILLOY**  
The Washington Post



sweat right along with the Godfather of Soul. I never knew why papa needed a brand-new bag, unless it had wine in it; but I knew what to say when I got something new: "I feel good!" or "I got the feeling!"

And the only way to express that feeling was to do the James Brown—to glide on one leg, if you could, with head bobbing and fists pumping, then spin, jump and fall into a 180-degree split, then snap back up—unhurt—and resume your glide.

I also knew how it felt not to get anything at all, especially from a girl. Again, Brown provided words and rhythm suitable to the occasion in what must be the best begging song of all time by a male vocalist, "Please, Please, Please."

I counted the word "please" 25 times—seven times back-to-

back at the start—on a recording that lasts less than three minutes.

Gourevitch dissected Brown's performance: "With each repetition, he invested the monosyllable with a different emotional accent and stress—prayer and pride, impatience and invitation—and although there was ache in his voice, he did not sound like a man pleading so much as commanding what was rightfully his."

This was not a song for doing the James Brown. Our band couldn't play it, and nobody but Brown could sing it. You couldn't whistle or hum it, either. You could, however, put it on a record player to convey your desire for that special someone to stay just a little longer.

Oh, yes. Good God almighty. Honey, please. Don't. Ohhh. Oh, yeah. Lord. I love you so. Pleeceeeeee. Don't go. Pleece-ee-ee-ease. Don't go. Honey, please don't go. Oh. I love you so. Please. Please.

Singer Bonnie Raitt was quoted in the Kennedy Center Honors program as saying about Brown, "You couldn't even list how many people have been influenced by him."

If only she knew how true that was.

## Foreign currencies and CNMI's economy

**H**ow do changes in value of foreign currencies affect the CNMI's economy?

International currencies, which are free floating, trade like commodities in the international financial markets and their values are determined on buying and selling volumes. However, some countries keep the value of their currencies fixed and only change as they deem necessary or due to international pressure. Examples of free floating currencies are Japanese yen and American dollar while Chinese yuan is fixed in value. Exchange rates are expressed as value of one country's currency in terms of another country's currency. For example, current price or value of Japanese Yen in terms of U.S. dollar is around 110 yen per dollar, similar to how we express the price of a commodity, such as 2 pounds of bananas per dollar.

When the value of a given country's currency rises its products become expensive to other countries to buy and vice versa. For example, U.S. dollar value against yen has decreased from about 120 to 110 yen in about a year. It means that the prices of the Japanese products for us have increased and the prices of our products to Japanese have decreased. In our case, the CNMI's products and services are cheaper to Japanese visitors because the fall in the value of dollar in terms of yen has increased their buying power. This is also a very favorable factor to get more visitors or the visitors who come here to spend more. On the other hand for the Japanese investors who have to send back their investment returns to their parent companies, this factor is unfavorable because it has reduced the yen value of their returns. It has also reduced the yen value of salaries of Japanese business managers who work here.

Now, looking at the Philippines' case whose currency has been consistently falling against the dollar, this has an opposite effect to

**By DR. MOHAMMAD ASHRAF**



that of Japan. As soon as the Philippine peso falls, it implies an automatic rise in the wages of Filipino workers in the CNMI because they get paid in dollars. In this case it would be in the best interest of Filipino workers to keep their savings in dollars and send home only enough to meet the needs of their families. Unlike Filipino workers, Chinese workers don't have incentive to keep their savings here because the value of their currency is fixed by the government. As you may have noticed in the national news media the matter of

fixed value of Chinese Yuan (RMB) is under serious debate between the U.S. and China. The U.S. government thinks the Chinese are keeping the value of their currency artificially low, which makes U.S. products expensive in China and Chinese products cheaper in the US. The logic behind this argument is there is over a \$100 billion trade deficit between the U.S. and

China. The United States is asking China to set higher rate of its currency or expect retaliatory actions.

In conclusion, I would say our government has no influence whatsoever on the value of any currency and we have to learn to live with the consequences of changing values of currencies particularly in our region. I may also add the news reporting of currency rates would be a valuable service to businesses and workers alike.

## Saipan Tribune

CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

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# American Samoa declares state of emergency

**PAGO PAGO, American Samoa,** (Samoa News/PIR)—American Samoa is in a state of emergency after Acting Governor Aitofele Sunia issued a “Declaration of Emergency” at 9am on Monday after Tropical Cyclone Heta moved away from the Territory heading towards Niue, leaving behind much damage to public and private properties. By Sunday morning, Sunia activated the American Samoa Government’s (ASG) Emergency Operations Center (EOC) to coordinate

emergency response activities staff by first responder personnel from various government agencies. Heta passed American Samoa within 140 miles off Tutuila and never made landfall, with peak damaging winds between 2 a.m. and 3 a.m. in the early Monday hours. The declaration states that Heta was expected to peak at sustained wind speeds of 180 miles per hour at its core, with gusts of 195 miles per hour and would create 45 foot wave surges.

“High winds, high tidal action and heavy rainfall has caused extensive damage to critical infrastructure and public and private property throughout American Samoa,” the declaration points out. It further states that Heta has resulted in “requiring medical evacuation and the emergency evacuation of 140 individuals.” In declaring the “state of emergency throughout ... American Samoa to remain in effect until further notice,”

Sunia called “upon the government, non-government organizations, private sector and residents of American Samoa to coordinate and assist with restoration efforts.” Representatives of the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) were on route to Pago Pago to assist to recovery efforts. Sunia said he would forward a request to U.S. President George W. Bush, to declare American Samoa a federal emergency site. By yesterday afternoon,

the request was been finalized and a copy was not available at press time. Governor Togiola Tulafono was expected back in the Territory from Apia either last night or this morning. He left Thursday afternoon to take part in the 91st birthday celebration of Samoa’s Head of State, Malietoa Tanumafili II that was scheduled for Monday this week. However, reports out of Apia indicated that the celebrations were canceled due to the aftermath of Heta.

## Palau murder suspect already has criminal convictions on Guam

**HAGATNA, Guam** (PDN/PIR)—A 43-year-old man charged with killing three family members and kidnapping another in the Republic of Palau last month was convicted on Guam on several felony charges, including criminal sexual conduct. Justino Yohai Imetengel, also known as Justin Hiroi, was convicted on Guam in 1995 and sentenced to serve 10 years, a local official said. Chief Mike Quinata of the Department of Corrections Parole Services Division said Imetengel received an early parole. “Imetengel received parole in July 29, 2002, but was never released from prison because Immigration had control of him,”

Quinata said, adding that Imetengel was a citizen of Palau. “Because he’s not a citizen of the U.S. and was convicted of a crime, he was deported.” Quinata said Imetengel was deported on Aug. 14, 2002. He said because Imetengel was never released from the Department of Corrections, Imetengel was not registered with the sexual offender registry. Imetengel was convicted of first- and second-degree criminal sexual conduct, third-degree terrorizing and child abuse. Last month, Palau officials arrested Imetengel, under the name Justin Hiroi, for allegedly killing a missionary pastor, his wife and their 11-year-old son on Dec.

22, 2003, in a bungled burglary attempt. Palau officials have charged Imetengel with 20 counts, including first-degree murder, second-degree murder, rape, sodomy and child abuse. Seventh-day Adventist Church pastor Ruimar DePaiva, 42, his wife, Margareth, 37, and their son, Larisson, were bludgeoned and/or stabbed to death. Imetengel also allegedly kidnapped the youngest and only surviving member of the family before strangling her and leaving her for dead on a secluded roadside. Imetengel pleaded not guilty by reason of insanity on Jan. 5. A trial date has not been scheduled and no bail has been set.

### HEINZ

From Page 1

need to politically posture, or to make yourselves look good in the eyes of the people. I’ve never seen that in this House. You should be proud of that. You went against what people have consistently exercised during elections,” said Hofschneider. The House of Representatives was frequently at odds with the Babauta administration in the last two years, starting out with the salary cap issue, to differences over the annual budget. Other lawmakers, particularly those who lost in the Nov. elections, gave thanks for the chance given them these two years to serve. They promised to continue being of service to the public, although in different capacities. Rep. Stanley T. Torres also took the chance to slam the Babauta administration, questioning the governor’s several off-island trips and accusing the administration of lobbying against his candidacy in the November

polls. He named Gov. Juan N. Babauta, Lt. Gov. Diego T. Benavente, and GOP financier Ben Fejeran as among those who told people in Precinct 3 to vote for all GOP candidates except for him. Rep. Herman Palacios pointed out that, contrary to some people’s perceptions, the 13th Legislature was one of the most successful, with the passage of the land compensation measure and the retroactive pay. Both issues have been languishing for over a decade now before the current House acted on them. Rep. William S. Torres cited his work with the youths as one of his accomplishments, as well as his continued efforts to improve the quality of life in the CNMI. He vowed to continue to play an active role in public policymaking. Rep. Danny Quitugua said that, despite the tension that sometimes come between the islands, he had always voted on measures for the good of not only Rota but also Tinian and Saipan. Other lawmakers expressed similar sentiments, extending their gratitude to

their colleagues, the Legislative Bureau staff, their respective staff, and the House’s legal counsels for being patient with them. Some spoke in English; others spoke in the dialect. Those who failed to retain their seats are Vice Speaker Manuel A. Tenorio, the two Torreses, Reps. Pete P. Castro, Herman T. Palacios, Frank DLG. Aldan, and Gloria DLC. Cabrera. Those coming back in the 14th House are Hofschneider, Floor Leader Jesus Attao, Reps. Martin B. Ada, Joseph P. Guerrero, Ben B. Seman, Arnold I. Palacios, Ray A. Tebuteb, and Covenant Party’s Oscar M. Babauta. The lower chamber ended official business by rejecting the Senate amendment on the bill that would have created a Park Rangers Office within the Department of Lands and Natural Resources. This effectively killed the bill as the Senate had held its *sine die* session Wednesday afternoon. The lower chamber then moved to file—shelve—all bills pending at the House.

### YOUTH

From Page 1

Secretary Babauta said the Kagman facility would require over \$1.8 million annually and 46 essential personnel to operate. Currently, it has 16 employees from Department of Youth and Services. In his remarks yesterday, Gov. Juan N. Babauta described the facility as one that “respects the dignity of the youth”, as it provides them an atmosphere of safety to learn lessons in life. “It has been said that freedom is most precious to those who lose it. Part of the goal of this facility is to teach minors that no amount of peer pressure, no amount of drug or alcohol, no

amount of quick thrill is worth giving up one’s ability to live in a free society,” said the governor. Once that lesson is learned, he said, then rehabilitation becomes reality. He said that providing the facility is a way of saying that “we care about the youth, we want them to succeed, and we’ll welcome them back to society.” Associate judge Ramona Manglona, in her remarks said the facility should not be considered as a recreational facility or an alternative house, reminding the public that the building occupants are individuals who committed crimes. She noted that the rehabilitation of the program must be fully utilized,

while making sure at the same time that justice is served. Attorney general Pam Brown noted the need for “keeping the (youth offenders) without detaining them.” Speaker Heinz Hofschneider said the funding used for the facility “is a money well spent,” as he urged the government and the public to put in more resources for rehabilitation programs. Department of Public Works Secretary John Reyes said the facility, which complies with federal standards, is the best in the region. Meantime, he said that pavement of the road leading to the prison facility is now underway.

## Nauru confronts Australia over 35 hunger strikers

**HONOLULU** (PIR)—Nauru has agreed to allow an independent team of doctors to assess the condition of a group of hunger strikers that Amnesty International says are in “dire” straights. The decision is the latest development in a growing rift between Nauru and Australia, which since 2001 has paid the island nation to operate a detention center for refugees seeking asylum in Australia. Nauru Minister for Finance Kinza Clodumar on Tuesday issued a statement condemning the Australian government for allowing the three-week hunger strike to continue. “The Australian Government cannot continue to ignore the plight of these forgotten people,” Clodumar said. Some 35 detainees began a hunger strike at the Nauru facility more than three weeks ago, five of them sewing up their lips. Four strikers reportedly are under treatment at the Nauru Hospital—

putting pressure on the hospital. But Australian officials deny the 284 detainees are being mistreated and say Nauru is milking the situation for increased financial support. “The people involved are within Nauru’s sovereign territory and all of the obligations are essentially the obligations of Nauru,” Australia Attorney General Philip Ruddock told ABC News. Nauru has been struggling to survive with few remaining resources since its once-prosperous phosphate mines were depleted and the detention camp currently represents a major source of revenue. Clodumar said Nauru’s agreement stipulates that Australia is responsible health services and supplies at the facility. With more than 30 hunger strikers growing weak, he said, Nauru’s hospital could soon be hard-pressed to serve residents of the little island.

### NORTON

From Page 1

familiarization tour for Norton and some congressmen who have not been here before. “The tentative plans are for them to visit some of our historical sites. I think they’re going to tour some garment factories.” Callaghan said the administration has also decided to move the groundbreaking ceremony for the American Memorial Park renovation from Tuesday, Jan. 13, to Friday, Jan. 16, to enable Norton to participate and offer some remarks. When asked as to the exact size of the delegation, Callaghan said: “My understanding is that there’s four congressmen, possibly accompanied by their wives, Secretary Norton, and David Cohen.” The delegation would be arriving onboard a military plane, hence the lack of a firm arrival time for the delegation as yet, Callaghan said. He added, though, that the tentative schedule is that

the group will arrive Thursday evening around 7pm, and would be checking in at the Hyatt Regency Saipan. Local law enforcement agencies would be handling the group’s security, Callaghan said, although he pointed out that Norton is also under the protection of the National Parks Service. “So, I am in contact with them to ensure security for her stay here.” As chairman of the House Resources Committee, Callaghan said Pombo is very important to the CNMI, particularly in terms of funding “so we’re very happy to have him here.” The congressman is also a member of the House Agriculture Committee. Pombo is on his sixth term in the House. He represents the 11<sup>th</sup> District of California, which includes San Joaquin County, and portions of Alameda County, Contra Costa County and Santa Clara County. He previously served as a city councilman in Tracy, California from 1990 to 1992.

### SAIPAN

From Page 1

Extension & Education Service, said the fungus has vanished from Saipan since 1998. He said, though, that the fungus wiped out three betel nut plantations in As Lito in 1997, wiping out an estimated 8,000 to 10,000 trees. At that time, Cabrera said Saipan’s betel nut trees totaled about 60,000, denying media reports that the fungus exterminated the island’s betel nut population. He insisted that the spread

of the fungus then was an isolated case. “The disease never appeared,” Cabrera said, noting a few exceptions for “some minor insects and other fungi.” On Guam, hundreds of betel nut trees in Merizo have reportedly died due to the fast-spreading fungus. Guam farmers have reportedly expressed fear of the possibility that the betel nut industry could be wiped out if the spread of the fungus is not controlled. An infected tree carries symptoms such as lesions on the leaves and dead young leaves, among others, Guam’s Department of Agriculture reportedly said.



# Pete A. reminds NMI students of scholarship deadline

Washington Rep. Pete A. Tenorio yesterday reminded Northern Marianas students that only about a month remains before the deadline for the 2004-2005 Gates Millennium Scholars award expires on Jan. 16, 2004.

(Eligibility for Federal Pell Grant can only be determined through the submission of a Free Application for Federal Student Aid [FAFSA] to the U.S. Department of Education.)

The goal of GMS is to promote academic excellence and to provide an opportunity for thousands of outstanding students with significant financial need to reach their fullest potential.

GMS selected 1,000 high-achieving students for the 2003-2004 academic year, bringing the total number of students awarded to more than 7,000 since the program’s inception.

All completed nomination materials must be postmarked or submitted on-line no later than Jan. 16, 2004. Student nominees, nominators, and recommenders are encouraged to apply online or download nomination materials on the GMS website, <http://www.gmsp.org>. General information, detailed instructions, and current scholar profiles can also be found on the GMS website.

Throughout December and January, GMS volunteers from the Asian Pacific Islander American communities will conduct information sessions and workshops. To find a site near you, visit the Organization of Chinese Americans website, <http://www.ocanatl.org>, click “Partnerships” on the top, click “Gates Millennium Scholars” on the left-hand side, and then click “Information Sessions and Workshops.”

Nomination materials and informational brochures may also be requested on the OCA website. Scroll down the main page and click “Request or order 2004-2005 GMS Nomination Materials or Informational Brochures.”

The Gates Millennium Scholars, funded by a \$1 billion grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, was established in 1999 to provide outstanding Asian Pacific Islander Americans, African Americans, American Indians/Alaska Natives, and Hispanic Americans with an opportunity to complete an undergraduate college education in all discipline areas.

Continuing GMS scholars may request funding for graduate education in the following areas: mathematics, science, engineering, education or library science.

In the 2004-2005 academic year, individuals are eligible to be considered for a GMS award if they:

- are Asian Pacific Islander American, African American, Hispanic American or American Indian/Alaska Native;
- are a citizen/legal permanent resident or national of the United States;
- have a minimum GPA of 3.3 on a 4.00 scale (unweighted) at the time of nomination;
- will be entering a U.S. accredited college or university as full-time, degree-seeking freshmen in the 2004-2005 academic year;
- have demonstrated leadership abilities through participation in community service, extracurricular or other activities;
- and meet the Federal Pell Grant eligibility criteria.

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**ELECTRONIC CARD**  
Filipino workers on Saipan register for an electronic card, a joint-project by the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration and the Philippines' PCI-Equitable Bank, during a recent visit of OWWA officials from Manila.

EDITH G. ALEJANDRO

**BEAUTIFYING GARAPAN**  
Key government officials and private sector leaders who have diligently worked to finally get the Garapan Revitalization Project going lead the groundbreaking ceremonies last week.

LIBERTY DONES

**LUNCH FOR THE ELDERLY**  
Senior citizens at the Aging Center were treated to an early Christmas treat Tuesday by the members and officers of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. The VFW holds the luncheon treat to promote camaraderie and patriotism in the community.

EDITH G. ALEJANDRO



**PARTY FOR CHRIST**  
Commonwealth Health Center staff members imbibe the holiday spirit as they gather for the government hospital's annual Christmas party.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

tribune subs





**SINGING MANAMKOS** LIBERTY DONES  
Senior citizens at the Aging Center serenade Gov. Juan N. Babauta, Lt. Gov. Diego T. Benavente and Community & Cultural Affairs Secretary Juan L. Babauta with Christmas carols during a recent holiday treat sponsored by the Governor's Office.



**HEAR OUR PLEA** EDITH G. ALEJANDRO  
Community members trooped to the Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center in Susupe to express their opposition to the proposed Sugar Dock dredging, citing environmental, historical, and sentimental concerns.



**A STEP AHEAD** LIBERTY DONES  
The first batch of Northern Marianas College students to graduate on a fall semester was a picture of pride during their graduation Saturday.



**RELAX LIKE A KING** JOHN RAVELO  
Massage attendant Ma. Cristina Villamor shows the way to the rooms of Tropical Blend Spa, the services of which and the tropical ambiance combine for total relaxation that's fit for a king.

sporting  
goods



# JSTA reports drop in crimes vs tourists

By EDITH G. ALEJANDRO  
REPORTER

The Japan Saipan Travel Association disclosed that the Department of Public Safety’s intensified operations against individuals victimizing tourists resulted in significant reduction in reported crimes against CNMI visitors.

This, as JSTA officials lauded DPS’ prompt action on calls to implement additional measures to protect tourists against criminal elements, especially those preying on those visiting the islands’ tourist spots.

The association applauded the

police department for its immediate response and decisiveness to put an end to the crimes perpetrated against visitors.

“The Japan Saipan Travel Association expresses its utmost appreciation for the quick and decisive response by the police department, which was strongly supported by Gov. Juan N. Babauta,” JSTA said in a media statement.

JSTA, a local association established in 1992 for the purpose of promoting tourism in the CNMI, has facilitated several invitations to Japanese tourists to help the CNMI’s tourism industry.

Due to the rising number of

crimes against tourists in recent years, JSTA had expressed concerns about the safety of foreign visitors on the islands. Tourism officials said that with the involvement of the DPS and the intensified campaign against criminal elements, Northern Marianas visitors are more safe and secured.

“With DPS involvement, we have been very fortunate and lucky and we have not received complaints of car break-in or tourist being victimized,” JSTA added.

As a result, JSTA is confident that it would bring additional tourists into the Northern Marianas.

“This is good for us, and most

especially the CNMI, as we all depend on our visitors to bring back positive image and great expectation about the CNMI. They are our agents and they close the link to other visitors who have not visited the CNMI yet. They are our honorary ambassadors,” JSTA noted.

Recently, the DPS and the NMI Crime Stoppers had given its campaign on crimes against tourists more teeth in order to put a stop to the increasing number of complaints lodged by visiting foreigners who had fallen prey to criminal elements while touring several known spots on the island.

Crime Stoppers coordinator Sgt. Tom Blas, Jr. said the anti-crime group has unveiled its newest campaign in reducing crimes against tourists by offering cash rewards for information leading to an arrest.

Blas said the group offers \$500 cash to individuals who would help authorities arrest individuals responsible for the continued burglary and theft incidents at different tourist spots in the Commonwealth.

He noted that the increasing number of car break-ins at beach locations frequented by tourists and the increasing number of purse snatching in

tourist areas will certainly have an adverse impact on the CNMI’s tourism industry.

He explained that the Crime Stoppers is offering to pay a minimum of \$500 cash rewards for information leading to an arrest of anyone responsible for a crime committed against tourists. The reward would go closer to or reach \$1,000 if more than one case is solved or if multiple suspects are arrested.

“Do your part and be part of the solution rather than being part of the problem, call Crime Stoppers at 234-7272. All calls will remain anonymous,” Blas urged the public.

## Road safety checkpoints set

The Department of Public Safety’s Traffic Section will be conducting sobriety checkpoints on Dec. 27 and 28.

The first setup will be on Beach Road Chalan Laulau by Chars Store. This target will be in operation at approximately 8pm and will be terminated at about 9:15pm on Dec. 27.

The second setup will be on 16 Highway Dandan by the Joeten Supermarket. This target will be in operation from 12:30am and will be terminated around 1:45am on Dec. 28.

Each checkpoint will last at least one hour and 15 minutes at each location. This activity is part of the Department of Public

Safety’s efforts to deter and detect and ensure that all vehicle occupants are protected.

In addition, the traffic officers will also be conducting highway criminal interdictions, saturation patrols, aggressive driver interdiction, and laser activities.

For more information, contact Sgt. Joseph Flores at 664-9084-6.



**MOBIL DONATES TO LIONS CLUB**  
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Mobil’s Commercial Territory Manager Jojo Dadivas, right, hands out the \$500-check donation to Saipan Fil-Am Lions Club president Danilo Robles, second right. The donation was used for Lions Club’s Christmas Gift-Giving Project for children with disabilities. Also in photo are Mobil’s North Complex manager Ren Mabesa, left, and Michael Guirey of Lions Club.

### Gift giving for special kids today

Parents of Public School System’s Special Education Program are informed that Tan Holdings Corporation is hosting the first annual gift-giving event for Special Education children on Friday, December 26, at 10am at the Dai-Ichi Hotel main lobby. Santa Claus will also be there. Parents are invited to bring their children. Refreshments will be provided.



dial rent







JOHN RAVELO

Safety Products Micronesia, Inc. kicks off local operations during its grand opening today at its Middle Road, Gualo Rai office. From left are Danny Badidles, Kits Marasigan, Desiree Chargualaf and Allen Reyes.

# Safety is new company's top concern

By JOHN RAVELO  
REPORTER

After a year of operating his Pacific Rainbow Paint Supply on Saipan, trader Manu Melwani expands his local business venture by officially opening the Safety Products Micronesia, Inc. today.

The new company joins Pacific Rainbow in its Middle Road, Gualo Rai office, adjacent to the former location of The Field's Sports Bar and Grill.

"There aren't very many [safety product] companies around. We wanted to give it a try here," said Desiree Chargualaf, Safety Products' purchasing manager. The company is an affiliate of Guam's Safety 1<sup>st</sup> Systems, which began operations in 1989.

Safety Products carries the popular Leatherman brand in tools. These products have 20-year warranty, Chargualaf said. The store also sells Pelican flashlights with lifetime warranty.

On display at the Saipan outlet are fire extinguishers, safety shoes, ring buoys, hard hats, safety gloves and glasses, raincoats, suits, chemical-resistant boots, and first aid kits, among other products.

The company also has absorbents, which are used to absorb petroleum products in cases of spillage.

Chargualaf said all products the company carries are compliant with standards set by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration and the American National Standards Institute.

On Guam, she said the business has boomed even as Supertyphoon Pongsona devastated the island's economy. The post-typhoon construction boom has had a positive effect on its business.

Chargualaf said, however, "Safety is not just for construction boom. Every company has to have some type of safety."

Safety Products' affiliate company, Pacific Rainbow Paint Supply, has been operating on Saipan for about a year now, exclusively distributing the internationally renowned Sherwin Williams paint products. The Saipan outlet of Rainbow followed that of Guam, which began operations in 1993.

Today, Safety Products invites the public to witness its Gualo Rai outlet's grand opening day. "I'd like everybody to come down and visit us," Chargualaf said.

## CDA closes \$40-M bond

The Commonwealth Development Authority has successfully issued the \$40-million General Obligation bonds.

Authorized by Public Law 13-17, as amended, the bonds will constitute debt of the CNMI issued pursuant to the Commonwealth Constitution, the GO bond law, the Bond Act, and other applicable laws.

The \$40-million general obligation bonds, Series 2003A received a rating of Ba3 from Moody's Investors Services and B+ from Standard & Poors on Nov. 26, 2003.

Maturing on October 1, 2033 with an interest rate of 6.750 percent, the bonds were sold to Lehman Bros.—the underwriters—on December 4, 2003.

At the office of Watanabe Ing, Kawashima & Komeiji LLP, Honolulu, Hawaii, CDA board chairman Sixto K. Igisomar, executive director MaryLou S. Ada, legal counsel Vicente T. Salas; Gov. Juan N. Babauta, consultant Rex I. Palacios, Marianas Public Lands Authority commissioner Henry S. Hofschneider, Special Assistant to the Secretary of Finance Robert Schrack, and legal counsel Alan Lane closed the \$40-million general obligation bonds.

Immediately after the closing, Lehman Bros. will deliver to bond trustee Bank of Guam—via federal funds wire transfer—the \$40-million GO Bond proceeds less the cost of issuance (\$1.5 million), to be deposited to the CNMI account in BoG.

Monies will be available for disbursement by MPLA after Monday, Dec. 15, 2003.

Proceeds of the \$40-million general obligation bond issue will be issued to pay for certain parcels and other private real property taken by the government for public roads, highways, as well as to fund the construction of the Adult Correctional Facility as provided in the Bond Act.

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# Some still confident about Boeing deal

By MATTHEW DALY  
AP WRITER

Acknowledging a setback from the Pentagon’s decision to postpone acquiring 100 refueling tankers from the Boeing Co., congressional supporters say they are confident the deal ultimately will go forward.

“It’s not dead. It’s just delayed,” said Rep. Todd Tiahrt, R-Kan.

Tiahrt and other lawmakers pledged to keep fighting for the deal, which has been planned for more than two years and is expected to save thousands of jobs in several states.

Congress last month approved a plan to lease 20 planes and buy an additional 80. But this week Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz announced “a pause” so the Pentagon’s internal auditor can examine whether two Boeing executives

improperly affected contract negotiations for the planes.

Wolfowitz did not give a timetable, but said in a letter to Congress that no action on the contract would be taken until the investigation is complete.

“The important word in the Wolfowitz letter is pause,” said Rep. Norm Dicks, D-Wash., a key supporter of the tanker deal. He said it was appropriate to examine the conduct of former Boeing executives Mike Sears and Darleen Druyun.

“It’s also appropriate for those who support this to remind the administration that we need new tankers and that we should sign this contract as soon as possible,” Dicks said.

Supporters of the deal argue that the ethics scandal does not change the need to replace the current 40-year-old fleet with new tankers for refueling aircraft in midair.

Boeing’s chairman and chief executive, Phil Condit, resigned Monday, one week after the company fired Sears, its chief financial officer, and Druyun, a Boeing vice president and former high-ranking Air Force official. A Boeing investigation found that Sears approached Druyun about joining the company while Druyun was overseeing Boeing contracts for the Air Force.

President Bush last week signed a \$401 billion defense bill authorizing the plan to lease and buy the tankers, but no final contract has been signed. The planes would be made at Boeing’s plant in Everett, Wash., and modified for military use in Wichita, Kan.

## Wal-Mart to stop taking debit MasterCard

By CHUCK BARTELS  
AP WRITER

Wal-Mart Stores Inc. will stop accepting signature debit cards issued by MasterCard starting in February, the first major retailer to take such action since a lawsuit settlement freed merchants to pick which credit and debit card services they use.

Wal-Mart, the world’s biggest retailer, said Wednesday that MasterCard’s fees for the signature debit cards are too high. It will continue to accept Visa’s signature debit cards.

MasterCard said the Wal-

Mart decision “confirms what was always the biggest threat of the merchant lawsuit—that it would take choice about how to pay for goods and services away from consumers and place it firmly in the grip of big retailers.”

The company added: “It is surprising in today’s environment for any merchant to make a conscious decision that will result in dissatisfied customers and lost sales.”

“Visa believes that the vast majority of merchants will continue to accept the Visa check card because of the significant value that it provides to them,”

Visa USA vice president Daniel Tarman said.

When the change goes into effect Feb. 1, Wal-Mart doesn’t expect many customers to be stopped dead at the cash register.

Wal-Mart spokeswoman Melissa Berryhill said Wednesday that fewer than 1 percent of Wal-Mart transactions are under MasterCard signature debit cards, and more than 90 percent of the cards carry a personal identification number that can be used instead of a signature.

Wal-Mart will continue to accept MasterCard debit cards if people key in their PIN numbers.

## SEC tentatively adopts fund trade curbs

Federal regulators on Wednesday proposed to close a loophole that allows illegal after-hours trading in mutual funds, in a bid to help restore investor confidence in funds that has been shaken by a spreading scandal.

The Securities and Exchange Commission voted 5-0 to tentatively adopt and open to public comment a new trading rule, the first step in its planned overhaul of how the \$7 trillion fund industry operates.

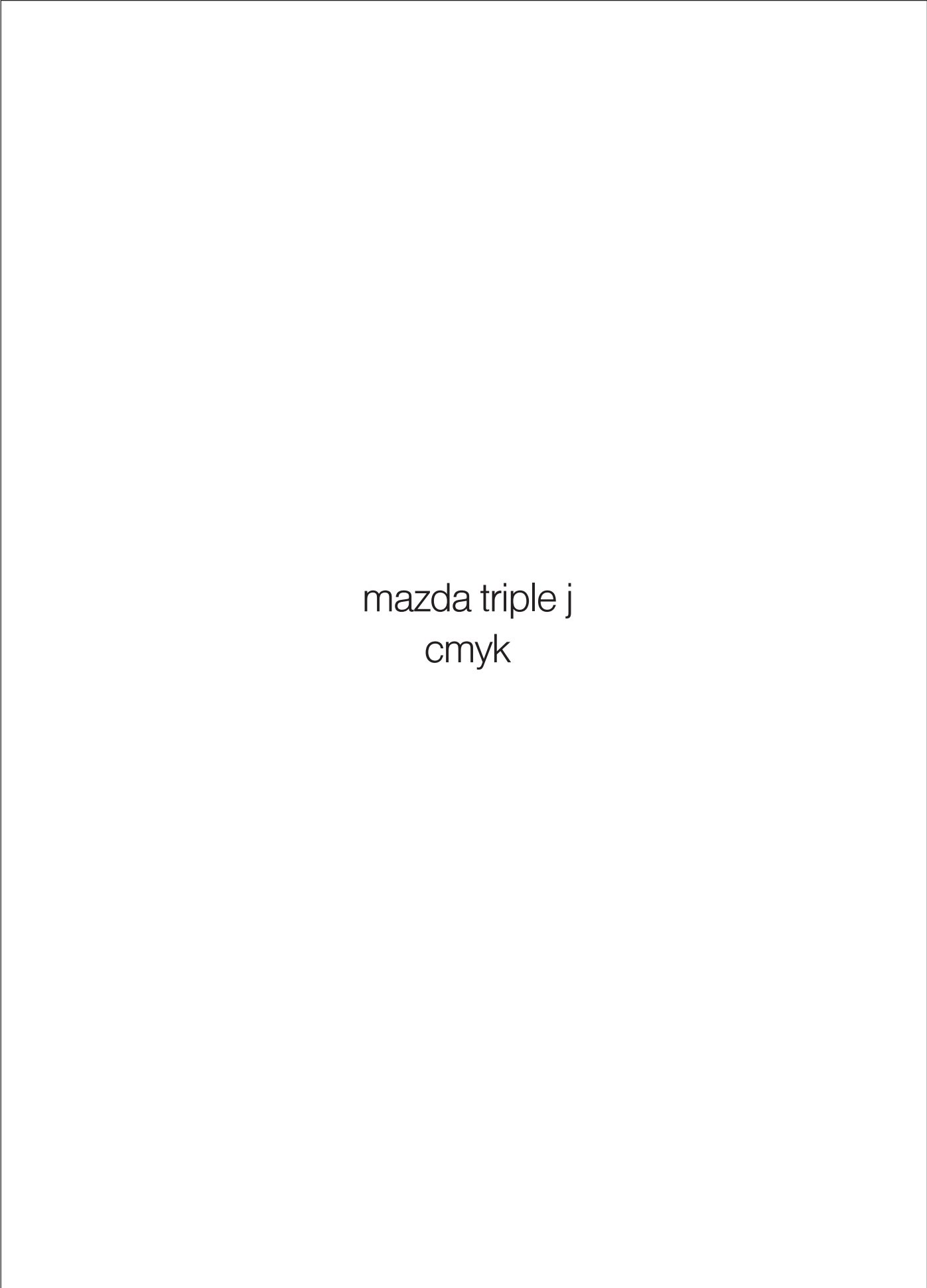
To stem illegal late trading, the rule would impose a “hard cutoff” of 4 p.m. Eastern time for pricing of fund shares.

The SEC is acting as problems spread through the mutual fund and brokerage industries, more big-name companies are cited for allowing special trading deals that

disadvantage ordinary investors and a money stampede continues out of implicated funds. Some 95 million Americans—half of all households—invest in mutual funds.

The SEC move comes two weeks after the House overwhelmingly passed legislation requiring mutual fund companies to disclose more information to investors about fees and operations, and making directors on fund company boards more independent from fund managers.

Treasury Secretary John Snow said the independent agency’s reform plan marks “important progress in strengthening the governance and transparency of mutual funds, in preserving the critical role that these funds play in our financial system and in protecting investors.” (AP)



# Nasdaq flirts with 2,000 as stocks jump

**By HOPE YEN**  
AP BUSINESS WRITER

The Nasdaq composite index flirted with 2,000 for the first time in nearly two years Wednesday and the Dow Jones industrials approached the 10,000 level as investors eagerly picked up stocks following a strong productivity report but then grew cautious.

The high-tech dominated Nasdaq reached 2,000 and the

Dow came within 58 points of 10,000 in the early afternoon before both indexes retreated and closed mixed. Analysts said investors were optimistic but choosing to take their time in sending stocks significantly higher.

“Folks are really starting to believe in the sustainability of the economic recovery,” said Richard J. Nash, chief market strategist at Victory Capital Management. “The productivity numbers were just spectacular” and should bring “another good surge in corporate profits.”

The Nasdaq rose as high as 2,000.92 before falling back to close at 1,960.25, down 19.82, or 1 percent. The index, which suffered the worst losses during the bear market of the past few years, had not traded above 2,000 since Jan. 15, 2002.

The Dow, meanwhile, closed up 19.78, or 0.2 percent, at 9,873.42. Earlier in the day, the



blue chip average rose as much as 88 points to reach 9,942.01. The last time the Dow traded above 10,000 was May 31, 2002.

The Standard & Poor’s 500 index fell 1.89, or 0.2 percent, to 1,064.73.

The Nasdaq’s return to 2,000 was a significant step in the stock market’s recovery from the heavy losses that followed the dot-com bust, recession and corporate ethics scandals of recent years. But the index still remains well below its record close of 5,048.62, reached March 10, 2000.

Wednesday’s gains followed a Labor Department report that U.S. productivity shot up at a 9.4 percent annual rate in the third quarter. It was the best reading in 20 years and better than economists’ forecasts as well as the 8.1 percent rate initially estimated by the department a month ago.

A report on U.S. service

sector growth was weaker than expected, however. The Institute for Supply Management said its index of business activity in the non-manufacturing sector stood at 60.1 in November, compared to 64.7 in October, according to Dow Jones Newswires. It was the slowest rate of growth since May; it also fell below analysts’ estimates of 64.5.

Stocks have risen in recent days, partly on investor optimism for a stronger economy. December also is typically strong for stocks as investors put year-end bonuses and dividends to work, although some analysts wonder if shares have risen much too far, too fast.

Declining issues outnumbered advancers 5 to 4 on the New York Stock Exchange. Consolidated volume was moderate at 1.85 billion shares, the same amount traded Tuesday.

The Russell 2000 index, a barometer of smaller company stocks, fell 8.41, or 1.5 percent, to 545.19.

Overseas, Japan’s Nikkei stock average finished 0.8 percent lower. In Europe, Britain’s FTSE 100 increased 0.3 percent, France’s CAC-40 advanced 0.9 percent, and Germany’s DAX index gained 1.7 percent.

GAVRAS

DASSAM COKE  
CMYK

## FCC okay with proposed purchase of News Corp.

**By JONATHAN D. SALANT**  
AP WRITER

News Corp.’s proposed takeover of DirecTV, the nation’s largest satellite television provider, should be approved by the Federal Communications Commission with certain conditions, the FCC’s staff recommended after studying the deal.

An FCC official, speaking on condition of anonymity Wednesday, said the staff backed the \$6.6 billion deal if DirecTV more quickly offers local over-the-air broadcast channels to its customers, and if an arbitration mechanism is set up to handle disputes between News Corp.’s Fox broadcasting arm and cable television companies.

The arbitration is designed to alleviate concerns Fox will pull its network programming off cable systems to encourage viewers to subscribe to DirecTV, the official said. Among that programming is the National Football League and major league baseball.

In May 2002, a dispute over how much Time Warner should pay for the Walt Disney Co.’s cable channels led to Disney’s ABC network being removed from Time Warner cable systems in New York and six other cities.

In January, some 400,000 Cox Communications customers in the Washington, D.C., area, Cleveland, Dallas and Houston lost the Fox network for a week in a dispute over whether the cable company should also carry two Fox cable channels.

The staff recommendation now goes to the five-member FCC, which will make a final decision, likely this month.

Under the deal announced in April, News Corp. would acquire 34 percent of DirecTV parent Hughes Electronics, a subsidiary of General Motors Corp. The deal would give News Corp. the largest block of shares in Hughes and controlling interest in DirecTV, which has more than 11 million subscribers.

Some consumer groups have opposed the deal, as have several cable companies, arguing the media consolidation is anti-competitive and threatens to further drive up the price of pay television.

News Corp. Chairman Rupert Murdoch has said the acquisition would not harm competition or limit consumer choices. He said the merger will improve DirecTV, providing consumers with more local TV stations and better high-speed Internet access.

graf





Nation

Nuclear experts search for ‘dirty bombs’

By JOHN HEILPRIN  
AP WRITER

WASHINGTON (AP)—Government nuclear experts are walking the streets in at least four major U.S. cities, using high-tech equipment hidden in briefcases and golf bags to hunt for radiological “dirty” bombs and other weapons terrorists might use.

The Energy Department’s Nuclear Incident Response Teams were deployed to Las Vegas, Los Angeles, New York and Washington last month, when the nation’s terror alert status was upgraded to orange, or high alert, according two government officials who spoke on condition of anonymity.

The officials said those cities were chosen because they were considered at “high threat” for attacks.

The Homeland Security Department also sent detection equipment to other cities for use by local officials.

The nuclear experts, drawn from national labs around the country, are conducting most of the searches. They are using a variety of equipment disguised



AP  
In a dramatization, experts test radiation levels after a simulated dirty bomb detonation in London’s Trafalgar Square in this 2003 file photo.

Costs mounting from terrorism alert

The sacrifice can be measured in dollars and cents—and surely it will run into the tens of millions. Sharpshooters deployed on Las Vegas Boulevard, extra patrols checking a North Dakota dam, helicopters circling Times Square. When the fifth orange-level terrorism alert took effect days before Christmas, local and state authorities put plans in action.

Now, 2 1/2 weeks later, costs are mounting steadily. Some local officials, particularly in big cities, worry they will wind up shortchanged by federal officials promising reimbursement. But others say the alert doesn’t mean higher spending—just smarter deployment—and that they’ve learned a great deal about effective homeland security since Sept. 11, 2001.

“Frankly, it’s maturity,” said George Foresman, Virginia’s special deputy for preparedness. “All of us—public sector, private sector—we’re getting smarter and better about how we need to respond.”

Said Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee: “At this point, it’s the cost of doing business.” He says the alert won’t create financial hardship for his state.

New Hampshire, Colorado, and many smaller or rural cities also reported no

additional costs. California’s Highway Patrol said they cut additional spending by 20 percent from the last alert.

Others, especially in urban states, border states and those with facilities that federal authorities pinpointed for protection, are seeing significant new expenses.

Los Angeles has spent \$9.3 million so far; New Jersey \$2.7 million and counting. New York state officials said they did not yet have a full accounting; the last alert cost New York City between \$5 million and \$7 million a week.

New Year’s Eve in New York City meant military helicopters overhead, mailboxes and trash cans removed, and a combination of heavily armed guards and plainclothes officers in the crowd. Counter-terror teams with equipment to detect chemical, biological or radiological contamination prowled the streets.

The overtime bill for New Orleans police the week of the Sugar Bowl—where federal officials had specific worries—could reach \$300,000. Protection for Las Vegas celebrations rang up more than \$400,000 in bills.

“We’ve always heard freedom isn’t free. No kidding,” said Jerry Bussell, Nevada’s homeland security adviser. (AP)

in items ranging from briefcases to golf bags.

Among the tools the experts might use is a Palm Pilot with a cadmium-zinc-telluride crystal that can detect radiation.

The officials did not disclose how many experts are working in the field or whether they have turned up anything suspicious.

Homeland Security spokesman Brian Roehrkas said there is no specific intelligence pointing to a dirty bomb or other plot

involving chemical, biological or nuclear devices.

“It should come as no surprise that the Department of Homeland Security directed specific security measures to prevent an act of terrorism,” Roehrkas said.

David Heyman, director of the homeland security program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a Washington think tank, said deploying the experts into cities for unspecified threats is a new

mission for the teams. They typically are used to respond to accidents, he said.

U.S. officials are particularly wary about the possibility of terrorists acquiring materials for a dirty bomb, which uses conventional explosives to disperse a plume of radioactive dust over several city blocks. Al-Qaida is known to have sought such weapons.

Unlike a nuclear weapon, a dirty bomb has no atomic chain reaction and does not require highly enriched uranium or plutonium, which are normally heavily guarded and hard to obtain. It relies on a lower-grade isotope, like those used in medicine or research, for its radioactive component.

townhouse  
+red

microl cashier  
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# Bush urges immigration policy overhaul

By JENNIFER LOVEN  
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

WASHINGTON (AP)—Promoting a plan that could brighten

his election-year prospects with Hispanic voters, President Bush on Wednesday proposed legal status—at least temporarily—for millions of illegal immigrants



Unidentified farm workers place stakes for vegetables to grow on Wednesday, Jan. 7, 2004, near Homestead, Fla.

## Oregon school shooter is seeking for new trial

GRANTS PASS, Ore. (AP)—A young man sentenced to nearly 112 years in prison for killing his parents and going on a deadly shooting rampage at his high school in 1998 is seeking a new trial, claiming evidence of his insanity was disregarded.

The petition, filed Dec. 17 in Marion County Circuit Court in Salem, says Kip Kinkel's attorneys at the time had experts who determined he was insane, yet allowed him to plead guilty without seeking a court-ordered mental examination.

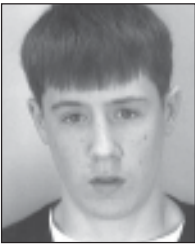
The petition also claims the judge should have ordered the mental exam to determine Kinkel's competency. Kinkel's

current attorney, Larry Matasar, declined Wednesday to comment on the case.

Kinkel was 15 when he shot and killed his parents in their home. A day later he drove to Thurston High School in Springfield. Armed with three guns, he sprayed a hallway and the cafeteria with bullets, killing two students and wounding 25.

Students tackled Kinkel and disarmed him.

The closest Kinkel came to explaining his actions was in a note he left at home, saying his parents could never live with the embarrassment of his expulsion from school for having a gun in his locker.



Kinkel

working in the United States.

But the sweeping policy overhaul, offered with few specifics, also angered many in the president's conservative Republican base of support and drew criticism from advocacy groups who questioned whether it would do much to help immigrants.

Democrats were united in calling the plan a political ploy that offers a false promise of legitimacy for the undocumented workers.

Decrying a system that now has "millions of hardworking men and women condemned to fear and insecurity in a massive undocumented economy," Bush urged Congress to approve a temporary worker program.

The program would be open to all undocumented workers now in the United States. Applicants who can show they have a job—or for those still in their home countries, a job offer—would get an initial three-year work permit that would be renewable for an unspecified period.

"We should have immigration laws that work and make us proud. Yet today we do not," Bush said in the White House's East Room, which he entered to loud cheers from dozens of representatives from Hispanic organizations and immigration groups.

Senate Judiciary Chairman

Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, praised Bush for opening the debate.

Allowing undocumented workers, who make up an unknown percentage of the approximately 8 million illegal immigrants now in the United States, to work legally here would benefit all Americans, Bush argued. He said it would make the nation's borders more secure by allowing officials to focus more on the real threats to the country and would meet U.S. employers' dire need for workers willing to take the low-wage, low-skill jobs unwanted by many Americans.

It also is the right thing to do, Bush said, to pull immigrants who now live in the shadows of American society under the protection of U.S. labor laws, allow them to travel freely back and forth to their home countries, bring dependents they can support here with them and grant them the confidence to talk openly to authorities about crimes and exploitation on the job.

"One of the primary reasons America became a great power in the 20th century is because we welcomed the talent and the character and the patriotism of immigrant families," the president said. "We must make our immigration laws more rational and more humane. And I believe we can do so without jeopardizing the livelihoods of American citizens."

shell



# Calves killed to prevent mad cow disease

**WILBUR, Wash.** (AP)—Federal workers using a vacant slaughterhouse in rural eastern Washington killed a herd of calves that included the offspring of a Holstein infected with mad cow disease whose bloodlines were traced to Canada.

The entire herd of 449 bull calves, ranging in age from 1 month to several months, was sedated and given lethal injections Tuesday, Nolan Lemon, spokesman for the U.S. Department of Agriculture, said Wednesday. The calves were buried at a landfill, a disposal method that officials said will protect the public from any possible health threat.

Agriculture officials had said the herd would have to be killed

because the calf born to the sick cow was not tagged and could not be identified. Officials have been unable to rule out the possibility that mad cow disease can be transmitted from mother to calf.

The animals were not to be processed for meat or other products. The carcasses will be buried at a landfill in southern Washington, Lemon said. Robert Nelson, a spokesman at the Washington state Agriculture Department, said a winter storm had delayed moving the carcasses and he expected the move in “a day or two.”

Sheriff’s cars blocked the snow-covered road leading to the slaughterhouse. A sign outside was covered with a black plastic bag.

Meanwhile, Sen. Tom

Daschle, D-S.D., and other Democrats announced their support for testing all cattle at slaughter. Daschle acknowledged it might not be immediately feasible because the USDA has yet to adopt tests that can be completed within a day or two. USDA officials have said they are considering more extensive testing.

Daschle also joined with other lawmakers from the Midwest in calling on Agriculture Secretary Ann Veneman to temporarily close the border to all Canadian beef products.

“We need to get as much information about the safety of products from Canada as we can,” Daschle said. “The only way to do that effectively is to

shut down the border.”

Agriculture officials on Tuesday announced genetic testing had confirmed the infected Holstein was born in Canada. The DNA tests on the cow, one of its offspring and the semen from the cow’s sire showed the cow came from a dairy farm in Alberta, said Dr. Ron DeHaven, the Agriculture Department’s chief veterinarian.

Dr. Brian Evans, chief veterinary officer of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, said independent testing from a Canadian lab confirmed the findings.

The results puts new emphasis on Canada’s role in the investigation of the outbreak of the brain-wasting disease. The Holstein is the second cow originating in

western Canada diagnosed with mad cow disease since May.

Agriculture officials announced the latest mad cow diagnosis Dec. 23, marking the first time the disease has been found in the United States.

The cow, which was slaughtered Dec. 9, had come to the United States from Canada with

80 other cattle two years ago. The herd was dispersed because the previous owner could no longer operate his farm, Evans said.

Both countries have been trying to locate the remaining cattle. U.S. authorities so far have found 10 animals at two Washington farms that remained under quarantine.

## Military can resume anthrax vaccinations

**WASHINGTON** (AP)—A federal judge Wednesday allowed the military to resume anthrax inoculations, although he questioned the timing of a government announcement declaring the vaccine safe.

U.S. District Judge Emmitt Sullivan announced his decision from the bench and then issued a two-page order, which ended the injunction he imposed Dec. 22 to halt the vaccinations.

The Pentagon has not said whether it will resume the vaccinations.

Eight days after the injunction, the Food and Drug Administration announced the vaccine was safe and effective for use against inhaled anthrax.

“Although the timing of the issuance of the rule is arguably highly suspicious, nevertheless, the rule has been issued and the principal reason for the issuance of the injunction has been addressed by the government,” the judge’s written order said.

Sullivan’s order still banned forced vaccination for six military personnel who filed a class-action lawsuit to stop the

mandatory vaccinations that started in 1998.

The Justice Department, citing the FDA order, had asked Sullivan to set aside his preliminary ban, except for the plaintiffs.

Sullivan’s action stayed, or halted, the class action part of the suit.

Sullivan said in his original order that he was convinced by the plaintiffs that the vaccine was experimental and being “used for an unapproved purpose”—that is, for exposure to airborne anthrax as well as exposure through the skin.

The federal government has long maintained that the licensed vaccine is safe, is not experimental and can be used for protection against anthrax inhaled or absorbed.

More than 900,000 servicemen and women have received the shots, among the millions of doses of various vaccines administered annually to protect troops against disease and bioterror threats. Hundreds of service members have been punished or discharged for refusing them, according to the Pentagon.

legislature bureau

### Jailer, inmate accused of spree

A deputy jailer and a convicted burglar he was supposed to be taking to jail in Kentucky were arrested Wednesday after going on a 100-mile drunken road trip in a law-enforcement vehicle and making a series of false arrests, authorities said.

The jailer and inmate were caught after drivers began calling authorities to report that a drunken duo was making traffic stops, state Trooper Ralph Lockard said. They allegedly let the drivers go after accepting cash bribes.

The pair had left Knox County, in southeastern Kentucky, on Tuesday evening and were supposed to head to Lewis County, in the northeastern part of the state. Instead, the cruiser and the two men were found west of Lexington, in east-central Kentucky.

During the journey, “the inmate ended up out of the handcuffs and in the front seat, consuming alcohol,” Knox County Judge-Executive Raymond Smith said. “They started stopping speeding motorists and arresting them. They would get them in the back of the cruiser, cut a deal for cash and let them go.”

The deputy jailer, Clarence Wilson, 37, was driving a vehicle marked similar to a police cruiser, including emergency lights on the roof, authorities said.

Wilson, 37, has been suspended from his job pending the outcome of an investigation, Smith said. He was charged with drunken driving, impersonating an officer, unlawful imprisonment and official misconduct.

The inmate, Shawn Phillip Reynolds, 23, was charged with alcohol intoxication. He is serving five years for credit card fraud and burglary.

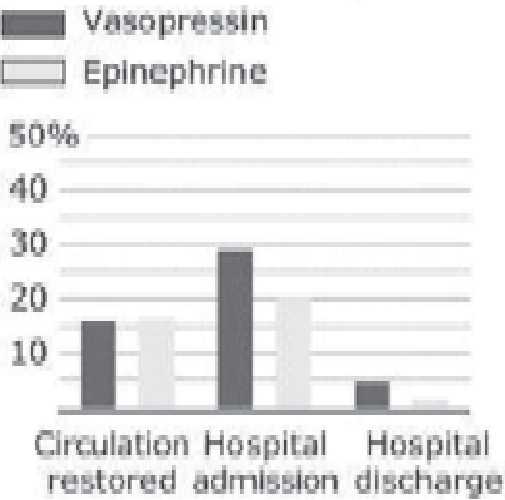
“I couldn’t believe this happened,” Smith said. “The next thing you’re likely to hear is that we’re on the Jerry Springer Show. I’m humiliated. I’m embarrassed. I apologize to the people of Knox County and the state.” (AP)

# For-profit insurers performance assessed

## Better drug for cardiac arrest

The hormone vasopressin saves many more lives after a patient's heart stops beating, compared to the drug epinephrine used for cardiac arrest for a century, a large study shows.

### Outcome in patients with no heart beat or asystole



SOURCE: New England Journal of Medicine AP

## Hormone rates well against heart attack

By LINDA A. JOHNSON  
AP WRITER

A hormone called vasopressin is clearly better at saving the lives of patients whose hearts have stopped than the drug doctors have been using for the past 100 years, according to a study that could transform the treatment of sudden cardiac arrest.

For a century, cardiac arrest victims have been given epinephrine, a synthetic adrenaline that constricts blood vessels and boosts blood pressure. It is often administered when shocking the heart with a defibrillator fails to revive the patient.

Using vasopressin instead improved the chances of reaching a hospital alive by about 40 percent, and tripled the chances of going home from the hospital, in patients with the most deadly type of cardiac arrest, asystole, where all heart activity has stopped. Still, only 5 percent who got vasopressin made it home.

The large European study was reported in Thursday's New England Journal of Medicine.

The finding should soon change international guidelines for treating people in cardiac arrest outside a hospital, predicted lead researcher Dr. Volker Wenzel, associate professor of anesthesiology and critical care medicine at Leopold-Franzens University in Innsbruck, Austria.

In an accompanying editorial, Dr. Kevin M. McIntyre of Harvard Medical School and Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston called the findings "an important breakthrough." He noted that vasopressin does not appear to have the risks of epinephrine.

"These advances should be translated into a new standard of care immediately," he said.

Vasopressin, a synthetic hormone that narrows blood vessels, has been around for decades. A few years ago, the International Liaison Committee on Resuscitation revised its guidelines to add vasopressin as an alternative first drug. That was partly because epinephrine sometimes increases irregular rhythms and decreases oxygen supply to the brain after resuscitation.

Each year, more than 600,000 people die of sudden cardiac arrest in North America and Europe, usually because of a heart attack or a heart rhythm disturbance.

By LINDA A. JOHNSON  
AP WRITER

To researchers' surprise, a study found that for-profit health insurers are just as likely as not-for-profit ones to pay for costly operations for the elderly such as heart bypasses and knee replacements.

The study of 1997 data on 12 operations and other procedures showed that for-profit plans were neither denying care nor holding down costs as much as commonly believed, the researchers said.

The study was led by Dr. Eric C. Schneider, assistant professor of health policy and management at the Harvard School of Public Health, and was published in Thursday's New

England Journal of Medicine.

"I think in some ways it's reassuring," said Dr. Robert Berenson, who oversaw Medicare managed care contracts from 1998 through 2000 and now is a senior fellow at the nonpartisan Urban Institute. "The public's concerned HMOs are denying services, and this shows they're not."

The study looked at patients in Medicare's managed care program, in which hundreds of private-sector insurance companies contract with the government to provide people with coverage.

Patients in for-profit plans were actually more likely to undergo two operations: minimally invasive gallbladder

removal and removal of a cancerous colon segment.

But after adjusting statistically for differences among insurance plans and patients, the researchers found the rates were about the same for such procedures as hip and knee replacement, prostate removal, cardiac catheterization, heart bypass, angioplasty and clearing out a clogged neck artery.

However, some experts say the Medicare+Choice program has changed greatly since 1997 and the study's findings may not necessarily apply today. Many insurers that were losing money have quit the program since then. And public backlash led many managed care programs to back off on cost controls.

The study was based on government data on 3.7 million Medicare beneficiaries in 254 health plans.

Schneider said the study's "counterintuitive" findings are probably due to some combination of factors. Among them: for-profit and not-for-profit plans may actually have similar incentives and cost-cutting approaches, and the for-profits are worrying more about lawsuits and bad publicity for denying care.

Dr. Hoangmai Pham, a researcher at the Center for Studying Health System Change, said the most likely explanation is that not-for-profit insurers are offering more preventive care, which reduces the need for surgery.

boh



# Embattled Conn. gov. apologizes on TV

By SUSAN HAIGH  
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

**HARTFORD, Conn.** (AP)—Gov. John G. Rowland asked Connecticut’s citizens for the chance “to earn back your trust” Wednesday as he delivered a televised address that came amid growing pressure to resign for accepting gifts at his summer cottage and lying about it.

Rowland again apologized for his actions, saying “I lied and there are no excuses,” but he insisted he never provided any favors or took any actions in exchange for the gifts.

“Tonight, I humbly ask for a renewed opportunity to earn back your trust, to redeem myself in your eyes and to continue to lead this state,” Rowland said.

The three-term Republican, who was once considered a rising star in the national party, said only he is to blame for a situation he described as “my own personal nightmare.”

“As you can imagine, I’ve had many sleepless nights over the past few weeks. I’ve wrestled with John Rowland the governor and the mess I’ve created,” said the 46-year-old, looking straight into the camera. “But I’ve also wrestled with John Rowland the person.”

The speech is part of Rowland’s strategy to talk to the public and to as many legislators as possible about his acceptance

of gifts for the renovation of the cottage. The gifts ranged from gutters to a hot tub.

Some lawmakers have called for Rowland to resign, and there is some support in the Legislature to pursue impeachment. Five newspapers have called for his resignation.

The address comes a day after the Republican had a closed-door meeting with six legislative leaders, and a day after federal agents issued a subpoena for the governor’s personal financial records.

On Thursday, Democrats who control the House of Representatives plan to discuss whether to begin impeachment proceedings.

Democratic Speaker Moira Lyons, who would have the ultimate say whether to appoint a committee to study impeachment, said she thought Rowland was somber and sincere in his apology.

“However, given the drip, drip, drip of the very egregious revelations, I think that is a very huge hurdle to tackle,” she said.

“The governor’s made-for-television speech was just another feeble attempt at damage control and it is too late for apologies and spin,” said House Majority Leader James Amann, a Democrat.

Rowland admitted he accepted gifts and improvements to the lakeside cottage from politically appointed state employees and from the Tomasso Group, a contractor that is part of a federal investigation into corruption in Rowland’s administration.



Rowland

Those who provided gifts include Lawrence Alibozek, a former aide who has pleaded guilty to federal charges that he took payoffs to help steer contracts. Federal agents have subpoenaed Tomasso and state agencies that had contracts with the group.

Some subcontractors have said they were promised they would get state work, possibly at the governor’s official residence, if they gave Rowland a bargain price for renovations.

Rowland has denied he made any such promises and said he did not know of anyone else making such promises. He has not been charged with any crimes.

Last week, federal investigators subpoenaed the state Department of Public Works for all documents relating to any construction and renovations made at the governor’s residence in Hartford. The department oversees the property.

## Two win \$8.1 milion in Tenet case

**SACRAMENTO, Calif.** (AP)—A Roman Catholic priest and a colleague have been awarded \$8.1 million following their whistleblower complaint about unnecessary heart surgeries performed at a northern California hospital.

The Rev. John Corapi, 56, and Joseph Zerga, 61, will be paid out of a \$54 million settlement that Redding Medical Center’s owner, Tenet Healthcare, reached last year with the federal government, U.S. Attorney McGregor W. Scott said Wednesday.

The shared award represents 15 percent of the settlement, the minimum allowed under the federal False Claims Act.

Corapi was seen in 2002 by Dr. Chae Moon, who was practicing in Redding and associated with Redding Medical Center. After undergoing a catheterization, Moon recommended Corapi undergo immediate, multiple heart bypass surgery, according to Corapi’s complaint.

The priest consulted a second doctor, who said Corapi did not need the surgery.

After complaining to hospital authorities, Corapi and Zerga filed a complaint with the FBI. No criminal charges have been filed in the case, but the FBI said its investigation remains open.

In agreeing to the settlement, which also reimburses the government for Medicare payments made for allegedly unnecessary surgeries, Tenet did not admit any wrongdoing.

Tenet, based in Santa Barbara, Calif., is seeking a buyer for the hospital.

## First troops arrive home at Fort Campbell

**FORT CAMPBELL, Ky.** (AP)—Dusty and tired after nearly a year at war, the first 200 or so members of the 101st Airborne Division to come home from Iraq cuddled their loved ones and bowed their heads in thanks Wednesday.

“This was a hard deployment. It’s great to be home,” said Sgt. Robert Robinson, 25, of Detroit, who was surprised to be met by his bride, Charisse, who wore a white fur hat and dog tags with a picture of him etched on one side.

One little boy hugged his father’s knee as the tired and dirty soldiers in desert uniforms stood in formation inside an airport hangar to receive a word of thanks for their service from retired Brig. Gen. J.W. Noles.

“Welcome to the real world,” Noles said.

With that, many of the soldiers dropped their battle-tested helmets with a thud and ran off to kiss their loved ones. Others bowed their heads in a prayer of thanks.

“I just wanted to have it done,” said Robinson, who spent eight months in Afghanistan before leaving shortly thereafter for Iraq. He and his wife dated three months before he was deployed, and they married while he was home on leave in October.

“I’ll go anywhere with him,” his wife said. “We can be home for all I care, just me and him.”

The members of the division’s Screaming Eagle team

were among 600 soldiers arriving this week. The 101st is part of the first wave of troops to return home in the first half of the year after completing one-year tours.

The soldiers spoke of their constant fear of getting ambushed while traveling in convoys, and the difficulties of living in the sand. They described looking forward to eating steaks and hanging out with friends.

Spc. Jason Chambers, 20, of Hallsville, Texas, joked about the rough language he picked up. “Being around these guys changes you a lot. I’m going to have to start watching my words,” Chambers said, his girlfriend by his side.

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cpa final notice

mpla





# Flu outbreak worst in 30 years in West

By DANIEL Q. HANEY  
AP MEDICAL EDITOR

The current flu outbreak is the worst for young U.S. children in years, several experts say, perhaps worse in Western states than the Hong Kong flu of 1968-69.

A government epidemiologist and other disease doctors predict flu deaths among babies and toddlers will exceed the estimated 92 who die in an average flu year.

“We would expect that number would be higher in a season like this. It would be more than 92,” said Dr. William Thompson of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. “The question is how

high. We can’t estimate that from our data.”

Even so, flu deaths among children are still rare. An average of 8,400 normally healthy children between 6 months and 24 months are hospitalized with the flu each year. The virus and its complications are the sixth-leading killer of children age 4 and under.

With the flu now widespread across half the country, large hospitals have already admitted hundreds of young patients, including a few critically ill in intensive care. Nearly all eventually get better, but the deaths have been particularly worrisome.

“What I am hearing

anecdotally is this is a very, very bad season for children,” said Dr. Walt Orenstein, director of the National Immunization Program at the CDC.

So far, the CDC has learned of about three dozen deaths in children and teenagers. It is unclear how that figure compares to previous years because the agency doesn’t keep track of flu cases.

For the first season in four winters, the dominant flu strain is a so-called H3N2 virus, which is the most dangerous of the three main varieties of the bug. For that reason alone, experts say, the number of pediatric deaths will be higher than average.

The CDC estimates that in an

average year, about 36,000 people—including 92 children under age 4—die of the flu. However, the totals vary from year to year, depending on the strain that is circulating. Through the 1990s, the annual tally has ranged from 17,000 to 65,000. In a year when the more benign B-strain of flu dominates, just 24 deaths under age 4 are expected.

Flu can be a serious disease for the young because they have not built up much natural defense against the virus. Most older children and adults can fight off severe illness, even if they get sick, because previous infections have strengthened their immune systems.

This year may be especially

bad because many young children have never encountered an H3N2 virus. Making matters worse, this season’s virus is genetically different from the one that circulated in the late 1990s, so older children who had the flu then may not have very strong immunity.

Flu is most dangerous for youngsters who already have heart and lung problems, such as

asthma, cardiac birth defects and lung damage resulting from prematurity.

However, doctors said they are especially concerned by reports of flu deaths among children who are otherwise healthy. In Colorado, where the first child flu deaths appeared, state officials said that at least four of the 11 young flu fatalities had no underlying diseases.

## Ex-governor indicted on corruption charges

**CHICAGO (AP)**—Former Gov. George Ryan, who gained a worldwide reputation as a critic of the death penalty, was indicted Wednesday on charges of taking payoffs in a corruption scandal that shadowed his entire four years in office and cut short his political career.

Prosecutors said the 69-year-old Republican and his family took cash, gifts, vacations and other favors to steer state business to friends and associates while he was governor and, before that, Illinois secretary of state.

“The charged conduct by former Gov. Ryan reflects a disturbing violation of trust,” U.S. Attorney Patrick J. Fitzgerald said. “Ryan is charged with betraying the citizens of Illinois for over a decade on state business, both large and small.”

Ryan did not immediately return a call for comment and no one answered the door at his home in Kankakee. Timothy Rooney, a partner of Ryan defense attorney Dan K. Webb, said a statement would be released later.

Ryan, who served as secretary of state from 1991 to 1999 and governor from 1999 to last January, has said he knew there was a culture of corruption in the secretary of state’s office but was unaware of the specifics.

He becomes the third Illinois governor indicted in the past 40 years.

Outside Illinois, Ryan is best known as an ardent critic of the way capital punishment is carried out. He declared a moratorium on executions in Illinois after it was discovered that 13 wrongfully convicted men had been sent to death row.

Last January, just before leaving office, he cleared out Illinois’ death row, pardoning four condemned prisoners and commuting the death sentences of 167 others to life in prison.

The scandal was a factor in his 2001 decision not to seek a second term, and his unpopularity was considered a major reason GOP candidates were routed statewide in the 2002 elections.

The five-year federal investigation initially focused on the selling of driver’s licenses for bribes at the secretary of state’s office, which oversees the motor vehicle agency. But the investigation was soon expanded to a range of corruption under Ryan, a glad-handing, baby-kissing politician from the old school.



Ryan

## Elderly man may be charged in fatal crash

**SANTAMONICA, Calif. (AP)**—Police will ask the district attorney to file manslaughter charges against an 87-year-old man whose car roared through a farmer’s market in this beachfront city, killing 10 people and injuring 63.

The July 16 crash was the result of unsafe speed and other violations by Russell Weller, police Chief James T. Butts told reporters outside police headquarters Wednesday.

“We’re asking consideration of the district attorney’s office in seeking to file the charge of manslaughter,” Butts said.

Los Angeles County District Attorney Steve Cooley said his office has received the police department’s more than 900-page report and will make a decision after reviewing it. An assistant prosecutor said he

expected a decision to be made in a few weeks.

“The DA’s office had prosecutors present at the crime scene within the first few hours and has been reviewing reports and interviewing hundreds of witnesses since then,” Cooley said in a statement issued shortly before the news conference.

Weller’s attorney said his client shouldn’t face charges.

“We’re anxious to see the report because we’ve conducted our own extensive investigation and concluded this was a tragic, terrible accident,” attorney Jim Bianco said. “There was no intent to hurt anyone, no negligence and no crime.”

He added that Weller was heartbroken by what happened: “He suffers every minute of every day knowing that he was driving that car.”

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# WTC tower design includes windmills

**NEW YORK (AP)**—Instead of the initially proposed “gardens in the sky,” the 1,776-foot Freedom Tower at the World Trade Center site will be topped by environmentally friendly windmills, people familiar with the latest plans for the building said Wednesday.

The building will have 70 floors of office space topped by broadcast antennas, wind turbines and cables resembling a suspension bridge.

The use of windmills in a tall building “is innovative and different and new and is something that will have to be designed carefully,” said Ashok Gupta, director of the air and energy program at the Natural Resources Defense Council, who has been advising redevelopment officials on environmental issues.

Neill Coleman, a spokesman

for the New York State League of Conservation Voters, said, “We’re very excited about the idea of a renewable energy component to the design.”

Detailed plans for the tower, the first that will go up at the trade center site, will be released next week by Gov. George Pataki.

The design is a collaboration between Daniel Libeskind, who submitted the winning plan for redevelopment, and David Childs, the chief architect for leaseholder Larry Silverstein.

The New York Times reported Wednesday that the design would bear little resemblance to Libeskind’s original, asymmetrical structure. A source familiar with the plans, who spoke on condition of anonymity, told The Associated Press that the twisting, tapered building would still evoke the

Statue of Liberty across the harbor, as Libeskind envisioned.

When Libeskind presented his site plan one year ago, the occupied floors of the 1,776-foot tower were topped by “gardens in the sky.” The building has undergone many revisions since then and its precise shape is still being determined, the source said.

Negotiations between Childs and Libeskind have been contentious and are continuing.

Asked about the building Tuesday, Libeskind said, “in the end, I would attempt to make sure the Freedom Tower fits in the entire setting” of his original plan.

Matthew Higgins, chief operating officer of the Lower Manhattan Development Corp., said: “We’re excited by the progress on the building, but more work remains to be done.”

# Police chief accused of misusing cash

**BALTIMORE (AP)**—Maryland’s police superintendent has been indicted on charges of spending charity money on extramarital affairs and personal trips while he was Baltimore’s police commissioner.

Indicted with Edward T. Norris was his former chief of staff at the Baltimore department, John Stendrini. They are accused of misusing more than \$20,000 between May 2000 and August 2002 from an account created from three Depression-era charity funds set up to benefit police officers.

“The defendants repeatedly used the funds as if it were their own ATM,” U.S. Attorney Thomas DiBiagio said Wednesday.

DiBiagio said the pair also used police officers to “transport female companions in connection with romantic encounters” between Norris and at least six women.

Norris, 43, is also accused of lying on a mortgage application to a municipal employees’ credit union.

His attorney, Andrew J. Graham, did not respond to phone calls Wednesday seeking



Norris

comment. Stendrini’s attorney, Michael Schatzow, was out of town and could not immediately be reached for comment, his office said.

Norris was the Baltimore police commissioner from May 2000 through 2002, when he left to join the Maryland State Police.

Aspokesman for Gov. Robert Ehrlich, who hired Norris as state police superintendent, said the indictment was being reviewed. Asked if Norris had resigned or had been asked to resign, Massoni said, “I can’t say.”

Norris said last summer that he would not step down from his job as superintendent even if he was indicted.

“Unless the governor asks me to leave, I’m not going,” Norris told The (Baltimore) Sun in July. “I haven’t done anything illegal. ... I’ll go to trial if it comes to that.”

Norris is charged with conspiracy to misapply funds, misapplication of funds and making a false statement in a mortgage application. Stendrini, 60, is charged with conspiracy to misapply funds, misapplication of funds and obstruction of justice.

If convicted of all charges, Norris would face a maximum sentence of 45 years. Stendrini would face a maximum sentence of 25 years.

More indictments could follow, DiBiagio said.

“The investigation is continuing, and this case is about more than Ed Norris,” DiBiagio said.

Norris and Stendrini were expected to surrender Thursday and make initial court appearances later that day.

# Detroit terror case in danger of reversal

**WASHINGTON (AP)**—The Bush administration’s first major post-Sept. 11 prosecution, which broke up an al-Qaida cell in Detroit, is in danger of unraveling after the Justice Department divulged it had failed to turn over evidence that might have helped the defense.

The evidence includes a letter from an imprisoned drug gang leader who alleges the government’s key witness confided he made up some of his story.

The December 2001 letter, which could have been used by defense lawyers to challenge the prosecution witness during the trial this spring, wasn’t turned over until a couple of weeks ago.

The defendants are now asking that their convictions be

overturned, and the judge has scheduled an emergency hearing Friday to demand an explanation from the government.

“It has come to the attention of the court that the government has recently provided defendants with certain material that was not provided to defendants either prior to or during trial of this matter,” U.S. District Judge Gerald Rosen said in ordering the hearing.

Senior law enforcement officials told The Associated Press on Wednesday the Justice Department is concerned how the judge will rule and will acknowledge that its prosecutors erred.

Under the Supreme Court’s Brady v. Maryland ruling, prosecutors are obligated to turn

over all evidence that can be used to impeach the testimony of prosecution witnesses or to prove innocence.

The Justice Department will argue, however, that the jailhouse allegation that prosecution witness Youssef Hmimssa lied is not supported by the facts and that the convictions should be upheld, the officials said. The two prosecutors who handled the trial have been replaced.

The dramatic turnabout in a case that was one of the administration’s early successes in the war on terror is further complicated by discussions between Congress and the Justice Department over whether the lead trial prosecutor is entitled to whistleblower protection.

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# Boston Archdiocese mortgages property

**BOSTON** (AP)—The sex scandal in the Boston Archdiocese has shaken the church almost literally to its foundations.

To help pay the \$85 million settlement reached with more than 500 victims of child-molesting priests, the archdiocese has mortgaged its very seat of power—the Cathedral of the Holy Cross—and is putting up for sale the archbishop’s residence, an Italian Renaissance-style mansion that was a symbol of the church’s grandeur and authority. Dozens of churches are also expected to be closed in a move at least accelerated by the scandal.

Some of these steps were almost unthinkable just a year ago, when Cardinal Bernard Law was in charge. The archdiocese fiercely resisted selling property to settle abuse claims before Law finally resigned as archbishop amid fierce criticism of his handling of the sex allegations.

“My sense was this was simply sacrosanct,” said attorney Jeffrey Newman, whose firm represents about half the victims in the settlement. “The property had a long tradition here, but it harkened back to an old regime that believed things like (molestation by priests) should be kept quiet and their reputation should be protected at all costs.”

It was not until the installation over the summer of Archbishop Sean O’Malley, a Capuchin Franciscan friar who had taken a vow of poverty and

refused to live in the mansion, that the church reached the record-breaking settlement.

The opulent three-story mansion, built by a former archbishop on the outskirts of Boston during the 1920s, has been valued at anywhere from \$14 million to \$100 million.

Where previously the mansion had been seen as a shining example of the church’s standing and power, it is now regarded by some as an embarrassing symbol of the arrogance of a church that protected child-molesting priests.

Boston College, a Jesuit university across the street, has expressed interest in the property, but it is unknown if any offers have been made.

## Thurmond daughter: I feel completely free

**COLUMBIA, S.C.** (AP)—The 78-year-old daughter of the late Sen. Strom Thurmond and a black maid said Wednesday that now that she has come forward to disclose her heritage, “at last I feel completely free.”

“There are many stories like Sally Hemings’ and mine,” said Essie Mae Washington-Williams, referring to Thomas Jefferson’s relationship with one of his black slaves.

“The unfortunate measure is that not everyone knows about these stories that helped to make America

what it is today,” Williams said.

Williams announced last weekend she is the illegitimate daughter of Thurmond, a former segregationist, and a black teenage maid in his family home, Carrie Butler.

Thurmond was 22 and Butler was 16 when Williams was born in Aiken, S.C., in 1925. She was raised in Pennsylvania by an aunt and uncle, seeing her mother sporadically and not meeting Thurmond until she was 16.

After Thurmond died in June at age 100, Williams said she began to think about ending “all the speculation and questions” about the long-rumored relationship. She said she did not come forward earlier because she didn’t want to jeopardize Thurmond’s political career.

“I am not bitter. I am not angry,” she said during a news conference just blocks the Statehouse where a monument of Thurmond sits. “In fact, there is a great sense of peace that has come over me in the past year.

“I feel as though a great weight has been lifted. I am Essie Mae Washington-Williams, and at last I feel completely free.”



### Jury deliberates sniper suspect’s fate

**CHESAPEAKE, Va.** (AP)—The jury in the murder case against sniper suspect Lee Boyd Malvo began deliberating Wednesday, trying to decide whether he was a willing participant in last year’s killings or was brainwashed by John Allen Muhammad.

Malvo’s attorneys mounted an insanity defense, arguing that Muhammad’s indoctrination left him unable to tell right from wrong.

The 18-year-old is charged with capital murder in the Oct. 14, 2002, slaying of FBI analyst Linda Franklin during the three-week reign of terror in the Washington area that left 10 people dead and three wounded.

Malvo is charged under two theories: One accuses him of multiple murders in a three-year period; the second alleges the killing was intended to terrorize the public.

The jury must conclude that Malvo pulled the trigger to convict him under the multiple murder charge. He initially confessed to being the triggerman but recanted several months later.

Muhammad, 42, was convicted of capital murder, and the jury recommended he be put to death.

### At least 30 arrested in Ind. heroin ring

**INDIANAPOLIS** (AP)—At least 30 people were arrested in a crackdown on a heroin ring operating in the Midwest for as long as a decade, authorities said Wednesday.

Thirty arrests were made in Indianapolis, Bloomington, Chicago and Cincinnati, and authorities said three more were expected. The operation brought in as much as \$500,000 a month, said Armand McClintock, a Drug Enforcement Administration agent.

The ring had no apparent ties to motorcycle gangs that have been implicated in other drug operations this year in Indiana, McClintock said.

“These are just old-time heroin traffickers,” McClintock said.

Seventeen of those arrested face federal drug conspiracy and possession counts, and others face less serious charges.

Authorities seized \$50,000 in cash, 16 firearms and a quarter-kilogram of heroin with an estimated street value of \$75,000.

### Man gets death in pregnant killing

**WATERBURY, Conn.** (AP)—A jury sentenced a man to death Wednesday for stabbing a pregnant woman to death over a drug debt.

Robert Courchesne was found guilty in 2001 of luring Demetris Rodgers to an ATM and stabbing her to death in 1998. The baby was born minutes after the attack, but died six weeks later. The woman was eight months pregnant.

Prosecutors said Rodgers was stabbed over a \$410 drug debt.

Prosecutor John Connelly argued that Courchesne did not immediately tell anyone what had happened—instead leaving Rodgers in the street to die.

But public defender Ronald Gold said the death penalty should be reserved for “the worst people who commit the worst crimes.”

“Can a good person do something terribly, terribly wrong? Yes. That’s what happened to Bob Courchesne,” Gold said.

Judge Frank M. D’Addabbo will formally sentence Courchesne on Jan. 15. He is bound by the jury’s decision, unless he finds flaws with the verdict.

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Asia

China appeals to Taiwan to open trade

By STEPHANIE HOO  
AP WRITER

**BELJING (AP)**—China appealed to rival Taiwan on Wednesday to reopen direct trade and travel links while vowing to “smash” what it calls an independence movement led by the self-ruled island’s president.

The mainland’s Taiwan Affairs Office said closer integration would help the island’s slumping economy, but

renewed warnings that formal independence could lead to a violent Chinese response.

“We must be well prepared to smash the Taiwan independence activities into pieces,” Li Weiyl, a spokesman for the office, told reporters.

The tone of the briefing—alternately conciliatory and menacing—captured the conflict at the heart of China-Taiwan relations. The briefing was called to release a report launching a

new appeal for closer ties but started with an angry statement denouncing Taiwan’s President Chen Shui-bian.

Chen is “wantonly conducting all kinds of activities for Taiwan independence, plotting to split Taiwan from China,” Li said.

Chen has announced plans to hold a March 20 referendum that asks voters to demand that China redeploy hundreds of missiles pointed at Taiwan, just 100 miles

off China’s coast. Beijing has long feared that any referendum could lead to a vote on independence.

Last week, Washington said it opposed any moves by Taiwan or China to unilaterally change the status quo. Chen has argued that his March 20 vote wouldn’t touch on sensitive sovereignty issues.

Taiwan’s legislature passed two resolutions Tuesday calling on China to remove hundreds of

missiles pointed at the island. The move was part of the opposition’s efforts to counter plans by Chen to hold the referendum by showing that it’s already clear that most Taiwanese want China to remove the missiles.

China also warned Taiwan on Wednesday that it shouldn’t try to join the World Health Organization, arguing that the self-ruled island isn’t an independent country.

Renewing direct links to the mainland—banned by Taiwan since the two sides split in 1949—will “bring benefits to both sides,” said He Shizhong, director of the office’s economics bureau, reading from the report.

Taiwanese businesses are lobbying for an end to the restrictions, complaining that they raise the cost of doing business with China, where many have factories.

Taiwan’s entrepreneurs have invested more than \$100 billion on the mainland since the island lifted a ban on commercial contacts a decade ago.

Tens of thousands of Taiwanese live at least part-time on the mainland and have to travel by way of Hong Kong or other third points when they visit their homes.

“The obstruction of the `three direct links’ has been one of the important causes of Taiwan’s economic stagnation,” the report said, referring to direct transportation, trade and postal delivery.

Devices on limo saved Musharraf’s life

**ISLAMABAD, Pakistan (AP)**—High-tech jamming devices saved Pakistan’s president from an assassination attempt, delaying by a few crucial seconds the detonation of a bomb that targeted his motorcade, intelligence officials told The Associated Press on Wednesday.

As investigators continued their probe into the attack, the government vowed to root out extremism, amid suspicions that al-Qaida or homegrown Islamic militants opposed to Pakistan’s support of the U.S.-led war on terrorism were behind the bombing.

President Gen. Pervez Musharraf was riding in a limousine through the city of Rawalpindi when the blast occurred Sunday evening, ripping through a concrete bridge just after he crossed it.



Musharraf

believed to include both a remote control and a timing device to trigger it, two intelligence officials told AP.

Jamming equipment in Musharraf’s limousine stopped the timer for about a minute and also jammed the remote control, the officials said.

“It was enough time for Musharraf to cross the bridge,” one of the officials said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

The jammers emit a magnetic impulse to block frequencies used

to trigger bombs—including the electronic signals from precision timers. Defense analyst Talat Masood said that security agencies worldwide use such equipment, and it had been imported to Pakistan.

Musharraf said he heard and felt the blast between 30 seconds and a minute after he crossed the bridge. There were no injuries as the bridge was blocked to traffic to let his motorcade pass.

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World



The US-VISIT system shows “No Hit Found” as it displays the fingerprints and photo of engineering student Andres Morales as it cleared him through customs at Hartsfield Jackson International Airport in Atlanta, Monday, Jan. 5, 2004 using the US-VISIT system.

US security needs anger some Europeans

By JILL LAWLESS  
AP WRITER

**LONDON (AP)**—Fears of a new airborne terrorist attack have brought heightened tensions, grounded flights—and created turbulence for U.S.-European relations.

Some European nations have balked at the United States’ tough new aviation security measures, which include armed guards on aircraft and preflight scrutiny of passenger lists. Airlines, hit by rising security demands, want governments to handle part of the cost.

Meanwhile, France is searching for an Afghan on a U.S. list of suspected terrorists because someone with his name failed to board a Christmas Eve flight across the Atlantic that was canceled amid security fears, officials said Wednesday.

A passenger surnamed Hai was ticketed for Air France Flight 68 to Los Angeles but did not show up, French officials said. They said investigators have not yet established whether the passenger is the Abdou Hai on a U.S. terrorism watch list or someone with the same name.

The name was one reason why security on trans-Atlantic flights was stepped up over the holiday season. In all, six Air France flights between Paris and Los Angeles on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day were canceled amid concerns members of the al-Qaida terrorist network might try to board planes.

The Air France flights were canceled after U.S. intelligence told their French counterparts that al-Qaida operatives would try to board the planes over Christmas, French officials have said.

Since the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks, many airlines around the world have acceded to U.S. requests, installing bulletproof cockpit doors on aircraft and agreeing to share passenger lists with U.S. authorities. But for some, the demand for armed sky marshals on flights to the United States was a step too far.

While a European Union-wide aviation safety agency is being established, each member country has been free to take its own position on sky marshals.

The Irish government, which took over the rotating presidency of the European Union on Jan. 1, said Wednesday it was

organizing a meeting of EU aviation chiefs in Brussels, Belgium, next week to discuss the U.S. request.

On Dec. 29, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security announced that airlines would be required to place armed law enforcement officers on flights to the United States “where necessary.”

The announcement came after U.S. authorities raised their terrorism alert to orange, the second-highest level, and increased security surrounding international flights. More than a dozen flights to the United States on British Airways, Aeromexico and Air France have been canceled or delayed since New Year’s Eve because of security fears.

British Transport Secretary Alistair Darling called the deployment of sky marshals “responsible and prudent” and said passengers would have to get used to increased security. France and Germany, alongside nations such as Canada and Australia, also agreed to the U.S. request, with Germany saying it has had sky marshals on some flights for more than two years.

But civil aviation authorities in Denmark, Sweden, Finland and Portugal all said they would not allow armed marshals to fly and would instead cancel flights if there was a strong suspicion of a planned attack.

Sky marshals are not the first American demand to have met a mixed reception. In December, after months of negotiations, the European Union agreed to share flight passenger lists with U.S. authorities. But the EU won concessions to comply with European privacy rules, including an agreement to hold the data for 3 1/2 years rather than the 50 years originally proposed.

And on Wednesday the Australian airline Qantas bridled at a U.S. request that it discourage passengers from gathering in groups during flights to America. Australian Transport Minister John Anderson described the request as “a little bit hard to handle.”

Other nations have been irked by the U.S. introduction of fingerprint scanning and photographing for visitors from all but 27 mostly European nations. Last week, Brazil began fingerprinting and photographing arriving Americans in retaliation.

fun & games  
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# Iraq mortar attack wounds 35 US soldiers

**BAGHDAD, Iraq** (AP)—Anti-American insurgents fired mortar rounds at a U.S. military camp Wednesday night, wounding 35 U.S. soldiers, the U.S. command said.

Six mortar rounds exploded about 6:45 p.m. at Logistical Base Seitz west of Baghdad, a U.S. military spokesman said in a

## 6 found guilty in assassination

**BRUSSELS, Belgium** (AP)—A jury on Wednesday found six men guilty in the murder of former deputy prime minister Andre Cools, whose assassination 12 years ago roiled Belgian politics, sparked a bribery investigation and led to the resignation of a NATO secretary general.

Prosecutors argued that former government minister Alain Van der Biest was involved in Cools’ execution-style killing on June 18, 1991, because Cools was trying to destroy his political career.

The jury deliberated for six hours before finding two men who worked in Van der Biest’s Cabinet guilty of planning the murder. Four others were also found guilty of participating in the murder.

All had pleaded innocent.

Van der Biest, 58, killed himself three months after being re-arrested in 2001 on suspicion of masterminding the murder. In a suicide note

he left for his wife, he wrote: “Forgive me. I am innocent.”

He was convicted in 2000 for a separate corruption scandal.

The son of the murdered socialist leader praised the jury’s verdict, which came after 12 weeks of testimony.

“The decision of the jury made good sense,” Marcel Cools said. “The verdict is reasonable.”

The Cools murder investigation led to the discovery of several corruption scandals, including the payment of bribes by Italian aircraft maker Agusta SpA to socialist politicians for a Belgian military contract.

That led to the resignation of four Socialist ministers, the suicide of an army general and the downfall of former Deputy Prime Minister Willy Claes as NATO secretary general.

The jury was to reconvene late Wednesday or Thursday to decide prison terms for the six, all of whom could get up to life in prison.

## More Army reservists called for Iraq

**WASHINGTON** (AP)—The number of military reservists called to active duty jumped by more than 10,000 in the past week, the Pentagon said Wednesday, reflecting an Army mobilization of National Guard and Reserve troops for Iraq to relieve the forces that have been there nearly a year.

Guard and Reserve troops will play a larger role in the new force, representing nearly 40 percent of the total of 110,000 troops, compared with about 20 to 25 percent of the force there now. They have been told they will spend up to 12 months in Iraq, meaning many will be on active duty for about 18 months, including a pre-deployment training period

## UN closes last Croatian offices

**UNITED NATIONS** (AP)—The United Nations refugee agency has closed its last three field offices in Croatia, a move it said symbolizes a “sea change” in the tiny republic once ravaged by fighting in the breakup of Yugoslavia.

The three field offices, which helped repatriate one-time refugees, were closed at the end of the year, the U.N. High Commission for Refugees said in a statement Wednesday. It said local relief agencies and the government can handle the remaining work.

statement. The camp is located in the so-called Sunni Muslim triangle that is a stronghold of resistance to the U.S. occupation of Iraq.

“The wounded soldiers were given first aid and have been evacuated from the site for further medical treatment,” the statement said. The Pentagon added that the soldiers were from the Army’s 541st Maintenance Battalion, based in Fort Riley, Kan., and part of the 3rd Corps Support Command.

The mortars hit “a living area where they have their sleeping quarters,” the spokesman said.

A Pentagon spokesman said that some of those wounded returned to duty shortly after the attack, while others were

hospitalized. The spokesman, Lt. Col. James Cassella, said he did not know how many were seriously or lightly wounded.

Earlier Wednesday, U.S. troops said they destroyed a home in Fallujah, the center of the anti-American insurgency west of Baghdad, where enraged neighbors said a married couple was killed and their five children were orphaned.

The neighbors insisted the couple was innocent in an attack on the troops that led them to shell the house.

“This is democracy? These corpses?” Raad Majeed asked at the hospital, gesturing at the remains of the couple, on gurneys covered with bloody sheets. “It’s

a crime against humanity.”

The 82nd Airborne Division said its paratroopers acted after receiving “two rounds of indirect fire” around 9 p.m. Tuesday.

“Paratroopers from our Task Force engaged the point of origin with a grenade launcher and small arms, causing two personnel to flee into a nearby building, which was also engaged and destroyed,” division spokeswoman Capt. Tammy Galloway said in a statement.

“The building was searched and no weapons or personnel were found. Upon questioning, civilians in the area reported two dead personnel were taken to a nearby hospital,” the statement said.

Civilian deaths in the counterinsurgency campaign have enraged many Iraqis at a time when the U.S.-led coalition is trying to win popular support. On Wednesday, the coalition announced it was freeing 506 of 12,800 prisoners in a goodwill gesture also aimed at encouraging more Iraqis to come forward with intelligence against anti-American guerrillas.

Officials offered rewards for the capture or information confirming the deaths of 30 more wanted Iraqis, putting bounties of \$50,000 to \$200,000 on their heads. That is in addition to bounties for the 13 remaining fugitives at large from the original 55 most wanted Iraqis whose pictures appeared on a deck of cards.

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# Mexicans guardedly embrace work program

By **OLGA R. RODRIGUEZ**  
AP WRITER

**GENERAL BRAVO, Mexico** (AP)—After lifetimes spent finding ways to sneak into the United States, Mexicans are excited over a new plan by President Bush that may allow them to cross legally for work while maintaining a life in Mexico. But many worry they will have to compete with a flood of new foreign applicants. Others, jaded by a U.S. immigration system that seems set up to work against them, believe the program could be a trick to catch and deport family members already living in the United States. In this tiny town, an hour’s

drive south of the Texas border, the only people who stay are those too young and too old for the trip to the United States. The rest shuttle back and forth, paying smugglers to get them across the border in sealed trucks or through snake-infested deserts. The trip has become increasingly dangerous as smugglers try to circumvent heavy security measures put in place after the Sept. 11 attacks on the United States. On Wednesday, the Bush administration announced a program aimed at allowing migrants with jobs to apply for a three-year, temporary work program. Administration officials

say the program will make America safer by helping document the estimated 8 million migrants now living underground in the United States. The program would allow migrants with potential or real jobs—both those in foreign countries and others living illegally in the United States—to apply for a temporary work status. They could come and go as they pleased, perhaps even living in Mexico but working in the United States. The Mexican government welcomed the announcement, with President Vicente Fox receiving a call Wednesday from Bush. Fox said the program would recognize the value of Mexi-

cans living in the United States. The governments of Colombia and the Dominican Republic also welcomed the changes. “Most Dominicans who are working in the United States illegally want to regularize their situation and live in peace,” said Rafael Peralta, spokesman for President Hipolito Mejia. “Latin American leaders should be celebrating this proposal.” But 20-year-old Alejandro Chapa, sweeping General Bravo’s town square for \$36 a week, wondered who would qualify for the new program. “Don’t you think it is going to be tough?” he said. “Right now it is really hard to get papers.” He believes that migrants

living in Mexico won’t be able to qualify because it’s hard to find jobs without traveling to the United States and usually immigration officials want you to show you have enough money to support the move. “They ask for too much. They even ask that you have money in the bank, and poor people like us don’t have anything,” he said. Many Mexicans are also wary of U.S. immigration officials, seeing them as a sure route to deportation. Many complain the requirements to get even a tourist visa to see relatives in the United States are too stringent. Some have spent years without seeing brothers or even parents. Others simply aren’t going to wait for the program, which must be approved by Congress. Chapa already has a job lined up at a Mexican restaurant in San Antonio, Texas, and plans to cross illegally with three friends on Monday. The four will pay a smuggler to help them. They dream of the day when they could simply apply for papers and cross a bridge over the Rio Grande, entering the United States legally and being protected under U.S. labor laws that are often ignored for illegal workers. Being able to travel back and forth - a key element of Bush’s

plan—is something many Mexicans would welcome. For 21-year-old Jose Guzman, the freedom of travel would mean he could earn dollars in the United States, but live in Mexico - where a U.S. minimum wage salary can buy a house, a car and many other things still out of reach for many poor Mexicans. “I would work anywhere to be able to come home with something,” he said. Some fear the new program will prompt a flood of Mexican applicants trying to enter the United States. Cruz Salinas, 69, said half of the young men from General Bravo are working illegally in the United States already, and the rest are trying to find a way to follow them. If the new program is approved, “all the young people here are going to want to go.” Priest Esteban Ramirez, who runs a migrant shelter in the border city of Reynosa, across from McAllen, said the program would clear the way for many Mexicans to finally return home. Many migrants stay in the United States for years because they fear they won’t be able to return. Still, he feared the program would impose a lot of requirements most could not met. “The problem is in the details,” he said.

## German Catholics: Muslim scarf political

By **DAVID RISING**  
AP WRITER

**BERLIN** (AP)—The Muslim headscarf should be considered a political symbol and legislation banning public school teachers from wearing it should not extend to religious symbols that are part of the country’s “Christian tradition,” a German Catholic organization said Wednesday. The statement was the latest development in a nationwide debate that began in September after Germany’s highest court ruled veils are allowed unless existing legislation outlaws them. The Federal Constitutional Court further said any new laws must treat all religions equally. The Central Committee of German Catholics said banning all religious symbols “would ignore the meaning of the Christian tradition of this country.” The headscarf should be seen as a “symbol against the equal rights of women, and thus against our free democratic constitutional structure as well as the values of our society,” the group said. Along those lines, the state of Lower Saxony announced Wednesday that it would introduce legislation next week

to ban the headscarf for school-teachers, joining Bavaria and Baden-Wuerttemberg. As in the two other states, Lower Saxony will propose banning the headscarf as a political symbol in order to prevent “it being equated with a cross,” said government spokesman Olaf Glaeseker. The head of Germany’s Jewish community urged states not to act in haste to pass new measures. In this week’s edition of the Juedischen Allgemeinen Wochenzeitung newspaper, Paul Spiegel said the debate over the headscarf has been superficial and needs greater discussion. Germany, which has some 3.5 million Muslims, is closely watching France’s struggle with the same issue. French President Jacques Chirac announced plans in December to ban all religious symbols from public schools. On Wednesday, a French Muslim fundamentalist leader said some Muslim girls will likely transfer to private schools, including Roman Catholic establishments, if the headscarf is banned. “I know that our Catholic brothers are very tolerant,” Lhaj Thami Breze, president of the influential Union of Islamic Organizations of France, said in a newspaper interview.

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The Islamic crescent moon is seen with the Christian cross as workers construct a memorial to victims of the Egyptian charter airplane crash on a hillside in the Red Sea resort city of Sharm el-Sheik, Egypt, Wednesday, Jan. 7, 2004.

# Egypt Air’s second black box found

**SHARM EL-SHEIK, Egypt (AP)**—Searchers on Wednesday detected the second black box flight data recorder of a charter jet that crashed into the Red Sea last weekend.

The box located Wednesday is about 2,625 feet below the surface of the Red Sea. The one found Tuesday was up to 2,600 feet deep, a French official said. They are between 1,100 and 2,000 yards apart.

“The signals were good and clear,” said Rear Adm. Jacques Mazars. “The signal of the second black box is stronger than the first.”

Both are too deep to be retrieved with the equipment on hand, said Mazars, adding they were waiting for equipment from France to retrieve the boxes.

The crash Saturday killed all 148 people on board. Most victims were French tourists.

In Paris, the prime minister’s office

said a special submarine on loan from state-run France-Telecom could arrive in Egypt as early as Thursday. That submarine can dive to 3,610 feet.

Another small submarine and a special French Navy vessel, the Beautemps-Beaupre, could also arrive within the week to map out the sea floor in the area, including debris.

France has sent in 500 people and equipment to help Egypt with search and recovery.

The salvage team will have three to four weeks—the estimated duration of the batteries feeding the signals—to find the black boxes, said Mazars, who heads the French forces sent to with the search.

“But if we have luck, we might have them in two hours,” he said.

Families of victims began arrived Wednesday in Sharm el-Sheik, about 480 miles southeast of Cairo, for memorial services on land and sea.

# Iraq leaders push for UN transition role

By **NICK WADHAMS**  
AP WRITER

**UNITED NATIONS (AP)**—U.S.-backed Iraqi leaders have stepped up pressure on Secretary-General Kofi Annan to have the United Nations play a central role in the country’s transition to self-rule, diplomats said Wednesday.

The moves come less than a week before a crucial meeting among U.N., Iraqi and coalition figures to help determine the world body’s mandate in Iraq.

In a letter to Annan, Abdel Aziz Hakim, representing the U.S.-appointed Iraqi Governing Council, asked the United Nations to help figure out how power should be transferred from the U.S.-led Coalition Provisional Authority to the Iraqis themselves.

Council diplomats said Wednesday the Dec. 29 letter was one of many from the Iraqi Governing Council urging the United Nations to return quickly to the country.

Annan pulled out all international staff after the August bombing of the U.N. headquarters in Iraq and says it is still too dangerous to return. A U.N. official said Annan hasn’t responded to Hakim’s letter.

On Jan. 19, Annan is scheduled to meet with the current president of the Governing Council and a representative of the Coalition Provisional Authority.

Annan has said the meeting is needed for the coalition and

the Iraqis to give the United Nations a clear idea of the role it will play until June 30, when a timetable worked out by the United States and the Governing Council calls for the coalition to hand over power to an Iraqi transitional government.

Neither diplomats nor U.N. officials will speculate on what the Jan. 19 meeting could produce.

However, council diplomats questioned how much work the United Nations would be able to tackle in Iraq that soon because it has no international staff on the ground. It is setting up offices in Cyprus and Jordan, and has Iraqis doing humanitarian work inside Iraq.

Council diplomats also said that Hakim’s letter points to deeper conflict within Iraq and the Governing Council itself that would affect the U.N. role.

Iraq’s Shiite Muslims, who comprise about 60 percent of the population, want direct elections for the government, while Sunni Muslims and other minorities back a Nov. 15 agreement that would have a legislature elected through caucuses in each of Iraq’s 18 provinces and convened by the end of May. Hakim is a Shiite.

One problem will be making sure any deal worked out between the United Nations and the Governing Council doesn’t violate the Nov. 15 agreement between the Governing Council and the coalition. The agreement doesn’t lay out a U.N. role in the transition of power.

BOG COMMON



# Israel, Libya reportedly in secret talks

By JOSEF FEDERMAN  
AP WRITER

**JERUSALEM (AP)**—In a sign of a possible thaw between longtime Mideast enemies, Israeli and Libyan officials reportedly held secret contacts in Europe last month, and an Israeli legislator said he met several months ago with Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi’s son.

The reports come as Gadhafi tries to remake his image after years as an international pariah. Both countries played down the reports. Libya denied the meetings took place, while circumspect Israeli officials said only that diplomatic relations are a “long way” off.

Gadhafi was once one of Israel’s harshest critics in the Arab world, at one point hosting military bases for radical Palestinian groups. In the mid-1990s, Libya expelled thousands of Palestinians in protest after Yasser Arafat entered peace talks with Israel.

But in recent years, Gadhafi has toned down his anti-Israel rhetoric as part of a larger effort to rehabilitate his international image.

Last year, Libya agreed to compensate families of the victims of the 1988 Pan Am 103 bombing over Lockerbie, Scotland, and to take responsibility for the actions of Libyan officials in the bombing. The United Nations

subsequently ended years of sanctions against Libya.

Gadhafi last month abruptly renounced efforts to build weapons of mass destruction and opened his country’s weapons-production facilities to international inspection.

That move was widely seen as a response to the U.S.-led victory in Iraq.

Still, Libya continues to be on the State Department’s list of terrorism sponsors, and U.S. sanctions against Libya remain in place.

Those sanctions, first imposed in 1986, have denied Libya access to hundreds of millions of dollars in property and bank assets, according to U.S. estimates. Peace moves toward Israel would likely be viewed favorably in Washington—and would be a significant achievement for Israel.

Peace treaties with its neighbors, Egypt and Jordan, and the ouster of Saddam Hussein’s regime in Iraq have ended many of the international threats against Israel.

Many Arab nations—from Morocco to Persian Gulf states—have informal or low-level ties with the Jewish state. Only Syria, Iran and, to a lesser extent, Libya remain as pressing international threats.

“Clearly this is part of a larger shift of Libya trying to restore itself in the good graces of the

international community,” said Bruce Maddy-Weitzman, a Libya expert at Tel Aviv University. “There is a widespread view that the road to Washington, if it doesn’t lead through Israel, it certainly can’t hurt.”

Nonetheless, he said he didn’t expect much to come of the reported contacts without progress on the currently stalled Israeli-Palestinian peace efforts.

Israel welcomed last month’s announcement on Libya’s weapons. Foreign Ministry officials said at the time the move could lead to friendly relations.

The most recent Israeli-Libyan meeting reportedly involved Ron Prosor, a senior aide to Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom. Israeli media said it took place last month in Europe—either in Vienna or Paris.

Israeli Foreign Ministry spokesman Jonathan Peled would not comment on the reports of the meeting, but said Prosor accompanied Shalom on a visit to Europe in late December.

The other meeting included Ilan Shalgi, an Israeli lawmaker from the ruling coalition, and Gadhafi’s son, Saif Salam Gadhafi.

Shalgi said the meeting took place in August in an undisclosed European capital.

“(Saif) Gadhafi impressed me very much,” Shalgi told The

Associated Press Wednesday. “He is a very serious man, speaks excellent English and has considerable self-confidence.” Israeli-Libyan relations weren’t discussed, Shalgi said.

The younger Gadhafi is widely regarded as the likely successor to his father.

The Libyan Foreign Ministry said Gadhafi’s son participated at a conference in Greece last summer attended by more than 1,000 people from 15 countries, and it played down the significance of any discussions during the event.

“Many people from the region participated in that conference and there may have been Israelis and others,” spokesman Hassouna al-Shawish said. “There was a session of discussion, but he did not meet anyone from Israel.”

Israel’s Foreign Ministry issued a statement saying “it’s still a very long way down the road before Israel and Libya can establish diplomatic relations... The Libyan leader has to demonstrate in action that he is headed toward real negotiation.”

The statement said Shalom would take advantage of every opportunity to improve Israel’s relations with Arab countries, saying Wednesday’s reports were “causing Israel damage” in reaching that goal.

## USaccused of killing Iraqi couple

**FALLUJAH, Iraq (AP)**—U.S. paratroopers fired on a house in this center of anti-American resistance, killing an Iraqi couple, orphaning their five children and enraging neighbors who insisted the pair were innocent.

“This is democracy? These corpses?” neighbor Raad Majeed asked at the hospital, gesturing at the remains of the couple, on gurneys covered with bloody sheets. “It’s a crime against humanity.” The 82nd Airborne Division said its paratroopers acted after receiving “two rounds of indirect fire” around 9 p.m. Tuesday.

“Paratroopers from our Task Force engaged the point of origin with a grenade launcher and small arms, causing two personnel to flee into a nearby building, which was also engaged and destroyed,” division spokeswoman Capt. Tammy Galloway said in a statement.

“The building was searched and no weapons or personnel were found. Upon questioning, civilians in the area reported two dead personnel were taken to a nearby hospital,” the statement said.

Civilian deaths in the counterinsurgency campaign have enraged many Iraqis at a time when the U.S.-led coalition is trying to win popular support. On Wednesday, the coalition announced it was freeing 506 of 12,800 prisoners in a goodwill gesture also aimed at encouraging more Iraqis to come forward with intelligence against anti-American guerrillas.

Officials offered rewards for the capture or information confirming the deaths of 30 more wanted Iraqis, putting bounties of \$50,000 to \$200,000 on their heads. That is in addition to bounties for the 13 remaining fugitives at large from the original 55 most- wanted Iraqis whose pictures appeared on a deck of cards.

There’s a bounty of \$10 million on the head of the most-wanted man since Saddam Hussein’s capture, Izzat Ibrahim al-Douri, one of the ousted dictator’s chief lieutenants.

In Fallujah, neighbors said U.S. soldiers were on a routine search for suspects and arms when they were fired on. The paratroopers then fired at the house of Ahmed Hassan Faroud.

Associated Press Television News film showed a wall of the house collapsed into rubble of concrete bricks and two walls splattered with blood that neighbors said belonged to Hassan, 37, and his wife Suham Omar, 28. They said the couple’s five children were in bed in an adjoining room and survived Tuesday night’s attack uninjured. Fallujah is about 30 miles west of Baghdad, the capital.

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COMMON

Science & Technology

Bias keeps internet from global expansion



**By ANICK JESDANUN**  
AP INTERNET WRITER

Rahul Dewan typed “India” into the search box of an online stock photo service, hoping to find digital images of his native country. He found only three—all of flags.

Dewan then typed “Switzerland,” a country smaller than his, and found 33, while “USA” returned 72.

His demonstration underscores a major challenge in getting the developing world online: Even with access, the Internet remains meaningless to most of the world’s population, its Web sites heavy in English and reflecting a Western tilt.

Dewan, managing director of the New Delhi software company Srijan Technologies, ultimately settled for Western faces and hands on his Web site, after failing to find Indian images he could use or a similar photo service catering to Indians.

So much for promoting his company as a homegrown business.

“They probably think this company belongs to somebody in the USA,” Dewan lamented at last week’s U.N. information technology summit. “Everything caters to the Western audience.”

People and organizations who work on connecting villages and schools throughout the world say their efforts only begin with providing Internet access and teaching people how to use computers.

There must be compelling information, in native languages and mindful of local traditions and distinctions—such as audio and illustrations for the illiterate.

“Getting technology into people’s hands is one thing. Getting people to use it is key,” said Daniel Wagner, director of the International Literacy Institute at the University of Pennsylvania.

Much of the Web these days is built by private ventures—mostly in the West and mostly targeting where they believe the money is: the industrialized world.

As a result, there’s little specific to developing countries, which remain largely offline. According to the U.N. International Telecommunication Union, 1.5 billion villages have no access at all to phones or the Internet, and 70 percent of Internet users live in countries that make up only 16 percent of the world’s population.

Some delegates to last week’s U.N. World Summit on the Information Society complained that even when

Web sites aren’t in English, they are usually in French, Spanish or one of a handful of other languages common in the industrialized world.

Adama Samassekou, Mali’s former minister of education, said languages spoken by millions of Africans, including Mandingo and Kiswahili, are virtually nonexistent online.

With more than 95 percent of Pakistan’s literacy base in Urdu, the Internet is relevant to only the country’s elite 5 percent, said Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari, Pakistan’s minister of information and technology.

The solution involves more than translating English sites.

To address illiteracy, South Africa is developing speech recognition, text-to-speech and other voice technologies, starting in Zulu. An open source model will let others adapt the tools for additional languages at little cost.

Sherrin Issac, a policy director at South Africa’s Department of Science and Technology, said many existing, Western technologies are inadequate—one voice compression algorithm, for instance, drops some “clicks” in conversations, changing the meaning of words.

Bulgaria, South Korea and other countries, meanwhile, are producing

government sites in native languages. But Internet users often must type English addresses to reach them.

One Korean company, Netpia, has developed a proprietary keyword system, so a Korean typing “Yahoo” in that language would automatically get the Korean version of Yahoo Inc. Netpia executive Jason Sohn said some sites saw traffic triple after using such keywords.

The Internet’s key oversight body also is studying domain names entirely in non-English characters—instead of requiring “.com” or another English suffix.

Other challenges remain.

The Canadian government still must adapt its internal search engine to accommodate online materials in Inuktitut, the Inuit language. English and French speakers can find synonyms like “fast” and “quick” in one search, but extending that capability to Inuktitut first requires creating an electronic dictionary.

In recent months, Microsoft Corp. began a local language program to help universities and governments adapt its software to more languages. King Letsie III of Lesotho, meanwhile, is promoting open source and free software as a way to let countries adapt

tools for their domestic needs.

A desire also exists to ensure that Web sites are culturally relevant—not limited to white faces, U.S. dollars and Western values. That, for instance, could mean write-ups in support of marrying cousins, a union rejected in the industrialized world.

Jerry Kennelly, whose Irish-based photo service Stockbyte was the site Dewan had demonstrated, acknowledged that only a fifth of people featured there are non-Caucasian, reflecting marketing demands.

“We’re not in the business of running a charity,” Kennelly said. “The minute we see a justifiable demand, we will be on it like a dog out of the traps at the greyhound races.”

Until then, the task of diversifying content has largely fallen on groups like Viva Rio, which has trained residents of Brazil’s urban slums, the favelas, to write about themselves, countering the news about crime and other problems dominant in Western outlets.

“The point is to produce more content that is useful,” said Bernardo Sorj, an adviser to Viva Rio. “If people go on the Internet and do not find good content for themselves, then they go to pornography.”

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# Season's Greetings: They're in the e-cards

By **DON OLDENBURG**  
THE WASHINGTON POST

Here it is just before Christmas and you didn't get around to sending out holiday cards, did you? Well, send season's e-card greetings!

"Internet cards are quick and easy and a good way to buzz someone," says District of Columbia resident Antonia Balazs, 36, who began sending her Christmas e-cards to friends last week.

As a paid subscriber at American Greetings' electronic-card Web site, Balazs has unlimited access to thousands of e-cards for all occasions throughout the year. She regularly sends e-cards for birthdays and thank-you notes. And now that it's Christmastime, she's sending mostly e-cards—though her short list gets store-bought paper cards.

"A paper card requires more time and effort. It is more thoughtful," says Balazs. "Close friends and family get that thoughtfulness. Others might not. At least this way, I've followed through in some fashion."

But holiday e-cards face uphill sledding against unyielding traditions this time of year. Seems a Merry Techie Christmas isn't everyone's vision of sugarplum fairies.

According to the Washington-based Greeting Card Association, a trade group representing the \$7.5 billion industry, more than 60 percent of the 7 billion cards sold each year will be Christmas cards. A GCA survey found that 92 percent of consumers planned to purchase paper greeting cards this holiday season; 76 percent said they would send out 20 or more.

"E-cards are another avenue or supplement, but they don't replace



traditional paper cards," says GCA's executive director, Valerie Cooper. "E-cards aren't quite as special as when someone takes the time to send you an individual card."

According to Hallmark, during all of last year people sent 88 million free e-cards for various occasions from its online site—and 946,000 of those were a last-minute flurry on Christmas Eve.

"People aren't convinced they have the same desired effect," says Hallmark spokeswoman Deidre Parkes. "Seventy-three percent of people surveyed said they send holiday cards because they know how good it feels to receive them. ... That doesn't necessarily happen with e-card sending."

E-cards don't stack up against paper cards for other reasons. Some recipients have slow online computer connections, which can make e-cards frustrating. And

spam filters and virus worries are to e-cards what dogs are to postal carriers.

The biggest selling point for e-cards has been that they were free. But this year most e-card Web sites shifted to subscription services—\$10 to \$20 a year—cooling some users' interest, says Parkes. Hallmark.com still boasts a huge selection of free e-cards—including 70 free holiday e-cards, many of them animated action scenes with holiday music.

"Postage isn't getting any cheaper!" says Jean Barto, a retired Army Reserve officer in Newport News, Va., who has sent 50 paper Christmas cards this year and, just last week, a dozen or so free e-cards. But she thinks the convenience argument for e-cards is overblown.

"When I send out the online cards, it takes nearly as long to do so as to write out and address a traditional card," says Barto.

But e-cards come in handy for people whose snail-mail addresses she can't find, she says. "There might be some

people on my traditional card list that may migrate to the online list—if they fail to send me a card back this year."

But e-cards' biggest obstacle is tradition. "Americans at Christmas are very traditional. Sending paper cards is a ritual steeped in that tradition," says Tina Benavides, executive director of card planning at American Greetings Corp.

People line their mantels with them, string them across doorways and hang them on their Christmas trees. "You could do that with (printed-out) e-cards but realistically you might not want to," says Benavides, who sends e-cards mostly to her dot-com friends. "I could never send my mother an e-card. But if you know someone who is into high-tech, then why not?"

And that's the niche approach e-card sellers are taking.

"Things are starting to really ramp up," says Sharon Schneider, senior vice president and general manager for



greetings at Bluemount.com, AmericanGreetings.com and e-greetings.com—all subscriber sites owned by American Greetings.

She says e-card sender demographics skew younger, more male and edgier than traditional greeting card buyers. The most popular Christmas e-card last year at Americangreetings.com was "Santa Boogie"—a cinematic Claymation-style e-card of a rotund St. Nick rockin' out on a rooftop. On e-greetings.com, flatulence e-cards are big sellers even in the holiday season. "A lot of it truly is all about the recipient," she says. "You pick the product that meets your needs."

Especially Wednesday—the busiest e-card day of the year. "The number of e-cards that will be sent will be in the millions," Schneider predicts. "It's a nice solution that lets people know you are thinking of them—even at the last minute."



By **JOHN M. MORAN**  
THE HARTFORD COURANT

If you're at all like me, you're hoping gadgets will be among your holiday gifts this season. And why not? Computer equipment and other electronics have been staples of holiday gift-giving for years.

So let's suppose you're lucky enough to get a new PC or cell phone or some other gadget. What are you going to do with the old stuff?

That's an increasingly important and vexing question. As our technology gets replaced, we're generating mountains of obsolete gear that needs to be disposed of.

And I do mean mountains. In the five years between 2000 and 2005, the Environmental Protection Agency estimates that as many as 250 million PCs will be junked.

Don't forget cell phones. Experts predict that new laws allowing consumers to keep their existing phone numbers when switching wireless carriers could prompt a wave of changes. Those consumers who do switch carriers are likely to switch phones, too, ditching millions of cell phones in the process.

Trouble is, much of that stuff contains hazardous materials that shouldn't just be thrown in the trash along with your food packaging and used napkins. Hazardous substances—such as lead, mercury, cadmium and barium—are common in computer equipment and other electronics.

Unfortunately, the electronics industry has only begun coming to grips with the problems created by obsolete technology. Recycling programs are few and often expensive, because there

are more gadgets needing to be recycled than there is demand for recycled parts.

Those of you who are determined to recycle—and good for you, if you are—can visit Electronics Recycling at [www.electronicsrecycling.net](http://www.electronicsrecycling.net) or information on where and how to dispose of old gadgets.

Tom Gaffey, the director of recycling for the Connecticut Resources Recovery Authority, urged residents not to throw junk electronics in with the regular refuse.

"Undoubtedly thousands of people will be buying new electronic equipment to replace older equipment over the holidays," Gaffey said. "Our message to the folks out there is to hold onto it until the next recycling."

Perhaps an even better solution is to find your stuff a new home. Identifying someone who can still use

equipment that no longer suits you has a double benefit. Not only do you avoid polluting the environment, but you give someone else a chance to enjoy technology that otherwise would go to waste.

Some nonprofit organizations have taken this approach, though their challenge is difficult. By the time some people upgrade their computer equipment, the old stuff isn't good for much.

All these alternatives, however, are Band-Aids on a festering problem. What's needed is a comprehensive, cradle-to-grave solution for technology and the hazardous substances associated with it.

Computer and electronics makers should build products that can be upgraded more easily, so consumers don't have to throw away the whole

machine when they want to improve one part of it.

The manufacturers should work to limit the amount of hazardous materials used in their products. And where those materials are essential, the hazardous parts should be arranged so that they can be easily removed by recyclers.

Government can help by promoting recycling and sponsoring collection drives that give the public a convenient way of disposing of their technology properly.

And finally, consumers have a big role to play by demanding that all the above parties contribute to a solution. Lean toward "green" technology, go the extra mile to recycle, ask your representatives when more recycling programs will be started.

A white Christmas is fine, but when it comes to technology, let's make it a green new year.



# Life & Style

## Media want judge to unseal Jackson files

By **TIM MOLLOY**  
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

News organizations asked a judge Wednesday to unseal court records related to the search of Michael Jackson's Neverland Ranch as part of the child molestation case against the pop star. Prosecutors, meanwhile, sought a gag order in the case aimed at Jackson's high-profile attorney.

The news organizations' motion filed in Santa Barbara County Superior Court contends the public was not properly notified of a request last month that the documents remain sealed until the singer's Jan. 16 arraignment.

"There needs to be notice and an opportunity to be heard regarding the sealing of court documents," said attorney Theodore Bontros Jr., who represents NBC, CBS, CNN, ABC, Fox News Network and The New York Times. "There must be notice so the public can go in and argue that documents should not be sealed."

The records were initially sealed for 45 days on Nov. 17,

the day before authorities searched the ranch for evidence involving the boy Jackson is accused of molesting. Jackson has denied the allegations.

The records include the search warrant, an affidavit in which authorities explained their reasons for seeking the warrant, and a list of items seized.

The records were to become public Dec. 31, but prosecutor Thomas Sneddon and Jackson attorney Mark Geragos requested on Dec. 24 that they remain sealed until the arraignment.

Superior Court Judge Clifford Anderson signed the order Dec. 26.

The media organizations requested Wednesday that a hearing on unsealing the search records be held the day of the arraignment.

The organizations said the lawyers reached an agreement between themselves to keep the records sealed, and the judge endorsed it without proper notice. The judge's order was posted on a court Web site for news media covering the case.

A call to Anderson was not immediately returned. Public

relations executive Susan Tellem, who is handling calls for Sneddon, said he was not immediately available for comment.

Geragos said he couldn't comment because he hadn't yet read the motion.

Also Wednesday, Jackson's prosecutors filed a motion seeking a gag order similar to the one in effect at the Scott Peterson murder case, which Geragos also is defending.

Prosecutors demanded an

order that would prohibit Geragos, Jackson and virtually every person with any connection to the case from talking to the news media.

"There are two prosecutions pending in California that, for different reasons, are each the object of unrelenting comment and speculation in the tabloid press, 'tabloid television' and even the regular purveyors of news," the motion said.

Those cases are "the Scott

Peterson matter, because of its brutality, and the Michael Jackson matter, because of the celebrity of the defendant and the nature of the alleged crime," the motion added.

Geragos was the clear target of the motion, which quotes the attorney as calling the actions of the family of Jackson's accuser "a shakedown" and a "scam."

"Attorney Geragos has not been shy about offering his own opinion about the supposed 'financial motive' of the boy identified as the victim in this case and the boy's

family for reporting their concerns to the authorities," the motion said.

Geragos said he would oppose a gag order, calling it "outrageous," and said prosecutors share responsibility for the publicity Jackson's case has received.

"When I first read (the motion), I wondered if the district attorney's office was suffering from short-term memory loss," Geragos said. "I was not the one conducting multiple press conferences with audio and visual displays."



Jackson

## Madonna urges others to support Wesley Clark

**WASHINGTON (AP)**—The Material Girl hopes people pay attention to her latest offstage act: endorsing Wesley Clark for president.

Madonna, who announced her support for the retired general before Christmas, posted a letter Wednesday on her eponymous Web site urging others to follow her.

"I am writing to you because the future I wish for my children is at risk," said the mother of two, who criticized the current White House occupant. "I'm supporting Wes Clark because in him I see the qualifications, character and vision that we so desperately need."

Madonna, who now calls London home, pledges to do all she can to help Clark's campaign and includes a Web link for people to contribute to the Democratic candidate. She also will hold fund-raiser at her Los Angeles residence sometime in the future, said Clark spokesman Bill Buck.

This isn't the first time Madonna has shown her distaste for the Bush administration. Last spring, during the Iraq war, she withdrew a violent, anti-war video that included a scene in which a grenade is thrown in the direction of a President Bush lookalike.

Arianna Huffington says the idea that Howard Dean is not electable is "nothing short of idiotic."

Huffington—the Republican activist-turned left-wing commentator and California gubernatorial candidate—has become a Dean devotee.

"Dean is electable precisely because he's making a decisive break with the spinelessness and pussyfooting that have become the hallmark of the Democratic Party," Huffington wrote this week in the regular column she posts on her Web site and that's published in some newspapers.

"Far from Dean not being able to 'compete' with Bush on foreign policy, he's the one viable Democrat who isn't trying to compete on the playing field that Bush and Karl Rove have laid out."

Huffington lambasted Democrats for comparing Dean to George McGovern, arguing a better comparison is to Robert Kennedy, whom she said also was accused of being intemperate when he ran for president in 1968.



Clark



Madonna

tribune

# Spears’ hometown not pleased with wedding

By CAIN BURDEAU  
AP WRITER

**KENTWOOD, La.** (AP)—Folks in Britney Spears’ hometown don’t see the humor in the superstar’s weekend wedding joke.

Spears’ 55-hour marriage to fellow Kentwood resident and childhood friend Jason Alexander has engulfed the town in an unwanted media frenzy and it has rekindled an old question: What’s she done for Kentwood lately?

“It’s embarrassing to have the worldwide media attention with the buildings in such rundown, decrepit conditions,” said Tammy Shaffett, a co-owner of The Hair Studio on Avenue F, the main street that once had

traffic and a movie theater. The wedding had the makings of a great yarn. Alexander—a hulking former high school football player—and Spears, wearing a white baseball cap, midriff-bearing shirt and



torn jeans, jumped in a limousine and got hitched at the Little White Wedding Chapel on the Strip at 5:30 a.m. Saturday.

Hours later, the 22-year-olds renounced their wedding by calling it a prank that went too far, and wrote the whole thing off with an annulment. Joke over.

But the stunt turned into an embarrassment for Kentwood—population 2,200—as Alexander returned home to his family with a flock of reporters, television crews and paparazzi following.

Since getting home, the Southeastern Louisiana University junior was “kind of hibernating” and collecting his thoughts, said his father, Dennis Alexander.

The media hunt for Alexander overwhelmed Kentwood as reporters questioned the town’s residents to find Spears’ groom. Reporters staked out his family’s home and sheriff’s deputies were called in two days in a row to disperse the crowd.

“Yesterday it really caused

chaos,” said Robert Alexander, Jason’s grandfather. He said Dennis Alexander, an auto mechanic, had to close his garage Monday because of the intrusion.

Downtown, television satellite trucks set up near the main intersection, causing locals to rubberneck all day.

Some said they want to be proud of Spears and her success, but think the pop star hasn’t shared her wealth with her hometown, which is languishing from a dying dairy farming industry.

“I wish the improvement of our town got as much attention as Britney Spears’ wedding,” said Dylea White, a co-owner of The Hair Studio.

“She should give some of her money to the town. She should help out. I know if I had some of that money I would,” said resident Heather Patterson.

Spears’ publicist did not immediately return a telephone call for comment.

## Harrison’s doctor offers to donate guitar

**NEW YORK** (AP)—A doctor accused of coercing ailing ex-Beatle George Harrison into signing a guitar offered on Wednesday to donate the instrument to charity.

A lawyer for Harrison’s relatives rejected Dr. Gilbert Lederman’s offer as “spin” and said they would not drop a lawsuit against the Staten Island cancer specialist, who treated Harrison.

The lawsuit filed Tuesday accuses Lederman of holding Harrison’s hand and forcing him to sign the physician’s son’s guitar over the weakened musician’s protestations.

The ex-Beatle died in November 2001, about two weeks after the signing. He was 58.

Lederman’s attorney, Wayne Roth, responded in an e-mailed statement Wednesday that: “Dr. Lederman developed a close personal relationship with Mr. Harrison, who freely autographed his son’s guitar.”

Lederman would like to donate the guitar, which has been valued at less than \$10,000, to a charity agreed upon by the doctor and Harrison’s estate, Roth wrote.

An attorney for the musician’s estate said it was “a ludicrous attempt to put a positive spin on what Dr. Lederman did.”

“The Harrison family does not want this object that was obtained in such a cruel and abusive manner to be traded, sold and displayed in the future,” Harrison attorney Paul LiCalsi said.



Harrison

crm

trib common





WALLACE

# OutKast leads NAACP Image Awards noms

LOS ANGELES (AP)—OutKast collected a leading six nominations Wednesday for the NAACP Image Awards, including outstanding duo or group and best album for “Speakerboxxx/The Love Below.”

OutKast, already nominated for six Grammys, will compete against itself for best song and music video, with “Hey Ya” and “The Way You Move” each nominated in both categories.

Beyonce Knowles received five bids, including best female artist and outstanding song and video for “Crazy in Love.”

Luther Vandross, the soul singer who’s recovering from a stroke, had four mentions—for male artist and the song, album and video titled “Dance With My Father.”

Best movie contenders were “Bad Boys II,” “Bend It Like Beckham,” “Deliver Us From

Eva,” “The Fighting Temptations” and “Whale Rider.”

TV comedy show nominees were “The Bernie Mac Show,” “Girlfriends,” “Half & Half,” “My Wife and Kids” and “Whoopi,” while TV drama nominations went to “24,” “Boston Public,” “CSI: Miami,” “Soul Food” and “The Wire.”

With the awards, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

honors people and companies that support positive change for people of color in arts and entertainment.

The Image Award nominations are determined by show business professionals and NAACP officials from across the country.

The 35th annual awards show will be held March 6. Fox will broadcast the program March 11.

## Actress Kate Hudson gives birth to a boy

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Actress Kate Hudson and her husband, musician Chris Robinson, have had their first child, a boy.



Hudson

Ryder Russell Robinson was born Wednesday in Los Angeles, weighing in at 8 pounds, 11 ounces.

Hudson, 24, the daughter of Goldie Hawn, and former Black Crowes singer Robinson, 37, have been married since 2000.

An Academy Award nominee for supporting actress for “Al-

most Famous,” Hudson most recently starred in last year’s hit romances “How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days” and “Le Divorce” and the flop “Alex & Emma.”



BIRTHDAY GIRL

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Becky Cruz, who will celebrate her birthday this Sunday, Jan. 11, gets a special greeting from her loving family and the ladies at the Department of Labor hearing office. “Happy birthday to a sweet friend, mom, and wife, Becky,” they said in a statement sent to the Saipan Tribune.

## Ray Charles plans show after sick leave

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Ray Charles says he’ll return to the stage in March after recovering from hip replacement surgery.

His March 2 concert at New York City’s Lincoln Center will be his first performance in eight months.

“I am absolutely thrilled at the prospect of going back to work before the public I love,” Charles, 73, said in a statement Wednesday. “Music and performing are in my blood. I need them like oxygen.”

Charles last performed in July, but acute discomfort in his left hip forced the singer-pianist to cancel his remaining 2003 tour dates. It was the first time Charles canceled a tour in 53 years.

He is undergoing physical therapy at his Beverly Hills home and recording a duets album with several musicians, including Norah Jones, James Taylor, Bonnie Raitt and Willie Nelson, spokesman Jerry Digney said.

A movie based on his life story, “Unchain My Heart: The Ray Charles Story,” starring Jamie Foxx, has finished filming.

## Paltrow’s choices come under scrutiny

NEW YORK (AP)—Whether her films are critical successes (“The Royal Tenenbaums”), commercial hits (“Shallow Hal”) or all-out flops (“View From the Top”), Gwyneth Paltrow’s choices have made her the subject of constant fascination and scrutiny.

“I had taken a year off and done a play, and they started to say, ‘Well, where is she and what’s she doing? All these other girls are moving up and she’s going to lose her place in line,’” said Paltrow, an Oscar-winner for “Shakespeare in Love,” in Vanity Fair magazine’s February issue.

“Everybody can’t wait for me to fail, because I am supposed to have this perfect life, which is complete nonsense. And then you feel like the tides are turning and it’s pick-on-Gwyneth time. I’m just a girl, so that can really get to me,” she says. “(I) don’t care if I’m not No. 1 or No. 5 or No. 10. I’m really (expletive) good at my job, and people who are interesting and good know that, and that’s all that matters.”

That attitude also has driven Paltrow to spend more time in London with her husband, Coldplay lead singer



Chris Martin, with whom she’s expecting her first child this summer.

“Everyone is doing their

own thing,” the 31-year-old says. “I feel like in L.A. everyone is looking over their shoulder, and in London nobody does that.”

## Wife’s old diaries stun husband after her death

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN

**DEAR ABBY:** My mother and dad had a full and happy 62 years together. She died last year.

While going through her things, we found several old diaries that Mother kept until a few months after marrying Dad (from ages 15 to 21).

Well, Dad read them and saw that Mom had dated a lot of men before they married, even one of his best friends. She wrote that there was also another man she wanted to marry, but he had a girlfriend in another town, and it was not to be. Apparently Dad had been unaware of it.

Dad was devastated. Now he’s telling all his friends how wild Mom was. This, after 62 years of devotion, love and two children.

The purpose of my letter is to warn diarists to please destroy any writings not meant for others to read. Get rid of them! Dad is 85 and brokenhearted.

SAD IN PENNSYLVANIA

**DEAR SAD:** Your point is well taken. However, someone needs to tell your father to stop feeling sorry for himself and to remember the good times.

If he’s worried about his deceased wife’s past, the truth is, she didn’t have much time for one. It’s time to end the pity party and dwell on the positive.

■ ■ ■ ■

**DEAR ABBY:** My 13-year-old daughter, “Rose,” has had a boyfriend, “Jason,” for nearly a year. He is 12. I just found out they’ve been having sex, and I’m putting Rose on birth control.

Jason never spends much quality time with her. I try to tell her that he is young and not ready for a serious relationship, but she doesn’t hear it. My heart aches when I hear Rose crying on the phone because they’re arguing.

Rose revolves her life around Jason. She doesn’t want to do anything with me or her friends anymore. Her attitude has changed tremendously, and she is losing interest in school. I have asked Rose to sign up for some kind of activity. She refuses. I don’t know what to do. Please help.

WORRIED MOM IN PENNSYLVANIA

**DEAR MOM:** It’s time to assert yourself. Rose and Jason are both too young to be having sex or even an exclusive relationship. It is up to you to help your daughter understand that as much as she might wish it, Jason is unable to give her the attention and commitment she’s craving. You didn’t mention if there is a father in your daughter’s life. If there isn’t, perhaps another adult male in the family can help.

Family counseling for you and Rose could be helpful. It will help to reopen the avenue of communication between you. Her priorities are seriously out of whack, and you are not reaching her. At this age, she should be developing social and intellectual skills.

**CONFIDENTIAL TO BETRAYED AND BROKEN IN BALTIMORE:** Dry your tears and stop blaming yourself. What goes around, comes around. This quotation says it all: “When a man marries his mistress, he creates a job opening.”

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at [www.DearAbby.com](http://www.DearAbby.com) or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

To receive a collection of Abby’s most memorable—and most frequently requested—poems and essays, send a business-sized, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for \$5 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby—Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included in the price.)



*Dear Abby*



Pastimes

**WONDERWORD** By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD. The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

HOME GYMS Solution: 7 letters

T S E H C T T T T R O H S A D S  
S G C R O S S R I G O R W T P  
W E B P T E A B I C E P S I O  
E L M F S R F H C D L O H P M  
A E I A O S R O T Y P C U A S  
T L L E G O N T M H T M T C P  
G I C C P T T M A E R S P E E  
U N B N R U U M R A R T O S C  
E N I A R T S T W E S N U B I  
L E C T H T S H E D D I N G R  
C T S S R E U Q I L B O D N T  
S E N I T U O R G N U J S R L  
U N N S A C H E H I G N A U L  
M G U E B R E A T H E E G B A  
S W O R K O U T S C H C N E B

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Ache, Ball, Bench, Biceps, Breathe, Buns, Burn, Chest, Chin, Climb, Contract, Cross, Dash, Fast, Foot, Games, Habit, Hamstrings, Heart, High, Hold, Hurting, Joints, Legs, Lifts, Lunge, Mats, Muscle, Oblique, Places, Posts, Pounds, Pushing, Raise, Resistance, Rest, Rigor, Routines, Runs, Shedding, Stretch, Short, Strain, Sweat, Swim, Tempo, Torso, Triceps, Tummy, Warm up, Weights, Workout. **Yesterday's Answer: Names**

NOTE: Postage and handling charges have changed for The Collected Wonderword. Add \$3 for the first book ordered, \$1 more for each additional book. Volumes 17 and 18 are \$5.95 each, payable to Universal Press Syndicate, Sent to WONDERWORD, 4520 Main St., Kansas City, Mo. 64111 or call toll-free, 1-800-265-6754, ext. 6613.

**CROSSWORD** By Eugene Sheffer

**ACROSS**

1 Confound  
6 Gregory Hines specialty  
9 "Great Expectations" lad  
12 Fable tag  
13 Milwaukee product  
14 Nest egg acronym  
15 Bog materials  
16 Comic strip  
18 Makes meringue  
20 Quest  
21 Actor McBride  
23 Moray  
24 Impertinent  
25 Graham Greene's "Travels With My —"  
27 Irascible  
29 Be sorry for  
31 Three-hankie movie  
35 Leilani's "Later!"

**DOWN**

1 Pump up the volume  
2 The buck stops here  
3 Caricature, e.g.  
4 Plasterer's backing  
5 Borden mascot  
6 Thwart the ball-carrier  
7 "Sad to say, ..."  
8 Apiece  
9 Reverent  
10 "Reversal of Fortune" star  
11 — raid  
17 "Casey at the Bat" poet  
19 Vigorous debate  
21 Train component  
22 Shade  
24 Sault-Marie link  
26 Dire  
28 Pundit  
30 TV Tarzan portrayer  
32 Illustration  
33 Diva's problem  
34 Uncivilized  
36 Famished  
38 Kind of alcohol or nitrite  
39 Match  
40 Parotid, for one  
42 Radiant  
45 Contract into wrinkles  
46 Clinton's hometown  
48 Conditions  
50 Young Mr. Lincoln  
51 Reticent

**37** Latvia's capital  
**38** Hardly snug  
**41** Ms. Thurman  
**43** Intimidate  
**44** Tangelo  
**45** Pawn capturer, often  
**47** Copied sketch  
**49** Lum-moxes  
**52** Longing  
**53** Evergreen  
**54** Big name in talk  
**55** Blazed a trail  
**56** Pigpen  
**57** Unkempt, as a garden

**Solution time: 25 mins.**

**Yesterday's answer 1-9**

**CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY**  
A.J. McLean, Dave Matthews, Crystal Gayle, Joan Baez

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY:** You must be smart if you want to play in the big arena, so build a solid base and take the time to know the facts this year. Remember, however, that all work and no play will lead to tedium. This is a year in which balance will have to be maintained to reach your highest potential. Your numbers are 6, 13, 18, 26, 35, 44

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**ARIES** (March 21-April 19)  
Be creative in your choice of entertainment and make this a memorable day. Money can be made if you invest in yourself. Younger people will have an influence on you. ★★★★★

**TAURUS** (April 20-May 20)  
Be careful with your choice of words when talking to family and friends. Don't cause more problems by being stubborn or refuse to listen to advice. Focus on improvement. ★★

**GEMINI** (May 21-June 20)  
The more traveling you do, the better. There is plenty of information to obtain if you put out your feelers. Opportunities will arise to form a relationship with someone influential. ★★★★★

**CANCER** (June 21-July 22)  
Focus on how much you can accomplish today. Financial ventures can turn out well, but don't get involved in a joint venture. You must remain in complete control. ★★

**LEO** (July 23-Aug.22)  
You will be ultra-sensitive today. Don't react too fast to what others do or say. Be forthright about what it is you are trying to do, but don't let your powerful demeanor take over, making others defensive. ★★

**VIRGO** (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)  
You may be tempted to take a risk today that could affect your financial situation. Don't assume you know what you are doing. Lack of facts can result in losses. ★★

**LIBRA** (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)  
Don't hesitate to ask for a favor from someone you know is in a position to help you. This could lead to meeting someone who will make a difference to your future. ★★★★★

**SCORPIO** (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)  
What appears to be a disaster in the making will turn out in your favor, if you are patient. Your secretive nature will be exactly what's needed to unnerve anyone who is trying to cause you trouble. ★★

**SAGITTARIUS** (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)  
Socializing will exhilarate you, but avoid gambling. Keep things light, fun-loving and romantic, and you will end up having a very memorable day. ★★★★★

**CAPRICORN** (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)  
Don't sign anything without reading the fine print. Helping someone else will be your best bet. Take care of any chronic health conditions before they worsen. ★★

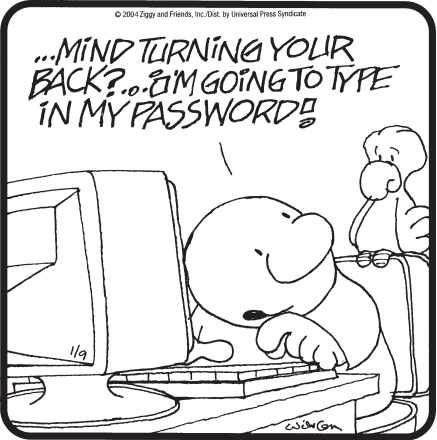
**AQUARIUS** (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)  
Take a deep breath before you deal with any emotional matters. Partnerships will be tense if you haven't listened carefully to the complaints of others. Be sensitive and understanding. ★★

**PISCES** (Feb. 19-March 20)  
You may be feeling restless and in need of a change, especially where your career is concerned. Gain additional knowledge in order to follow your goals. Don't be afraid to go in a unique direction. ★★

**BIRTHDAY BABY:** You are very intuitive and, if you follow your instincts, you will reach your goals. You are astute, dedicated and willing to do whatever it takes to walk down your chosen path.

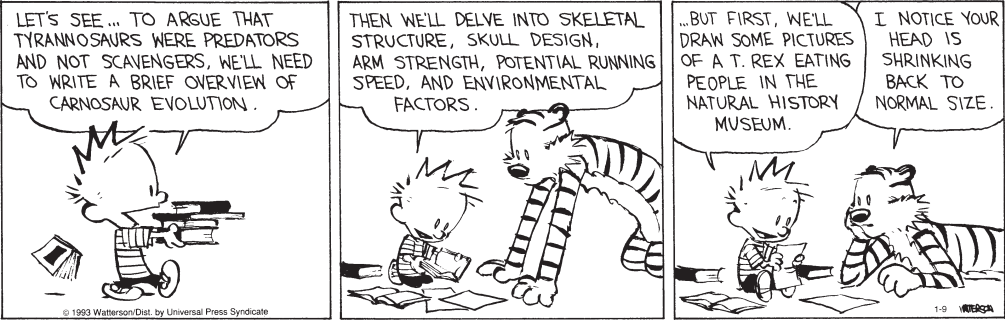
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Ziggy®



Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Watterson



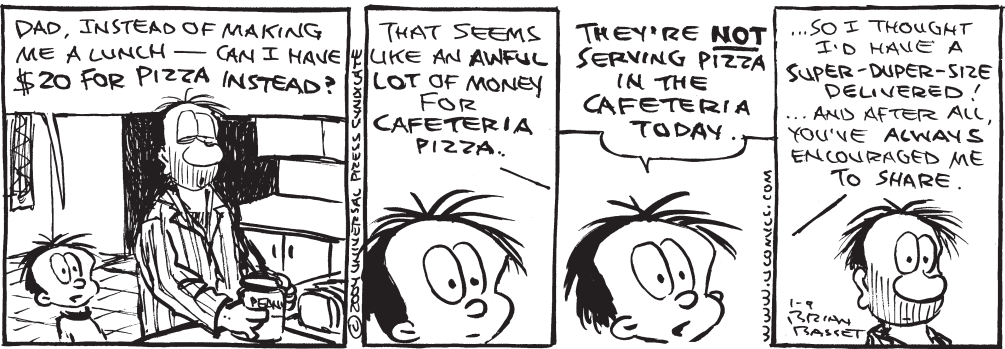
Garfield®

by Jim Davis



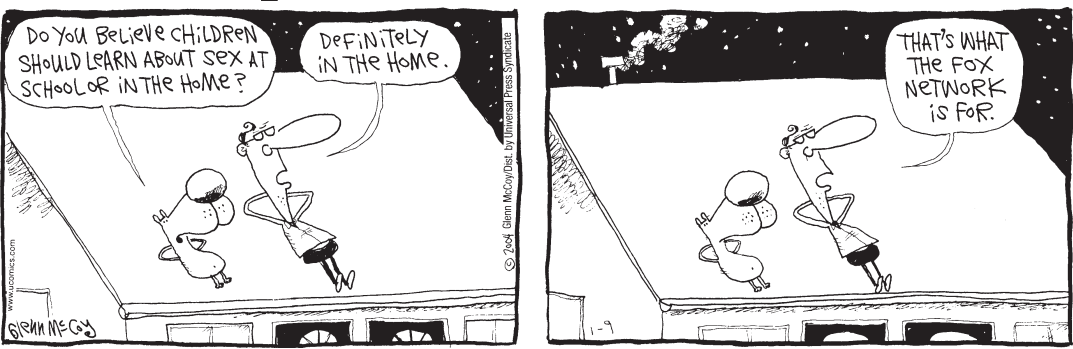
Adam@home

By Brian Basset



The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy





# Pastimes



NBA STANDINGS					
EASTERN CONFERENCE					
Atlantic Division					
	W	L	Pct	G	
New Jersey	39	25	.609	-	
Philadelphia	37	26	.587	1 1/2	
Boston	37	27	.578	2	
Orlando	33	33	.500	7	
Washington	31	33	.484	8	
New York	28	36	.438	11	
Miami	21	43	.328	18	
Central Division					
Detroit	40	23	.635	-	
Indiana	38	27	.585	3	
New Orleans	37	29	.561	4 1/2	
Milwaukee	32	33	.492	9	
Atlanta	26	39	.400	15	
Chicago	23	43	.348	18 1/2	
Toronto	20	42	.323	19 1/2	
Cleveland	11	53	.172	29 1/2	
WESTERN CONFERENCE					
Midwest Division					
Dallas	48	15	.762	-	
San Antonio	45	18	.714	3	
Minnesota	42	25	.627	8	
Utah	37	27	.578	11 1/2	
Houston	33	30	.524	15	
Memphis	23	41	.359	25 1/2	
Denver	14	51	.215	35	
Pacific Division					
Sacramento	45	19	.703	-	
Portland	42	22	.656	3	
L.A. Lakers	35	28	.556	9 1/2	
Phoenix	33	30	.524	11 1/2	
Golden State	31	33	.484	14	
Seattle	28	34	.452	16	
L.A. Clippers	20	44	.313	25	

NBA STANDINGS		
EASTERN CONFERENCE		
Atlantic Division		
Team	W	L
New Jersey	31	14
Boston	26	19
Philadelphia	24	22
Orlando	24	23
Washington	22	24
New York	19	25
Miami	16	29
Central Division		
Indiana	33	13
Detroit	29	15
New Orleans	24	22
Milwaukee	22	22
Chicago	17	28
Atlanta	17	29
Toronto	11	34
Cleveland	9	37
WESTERN CONFERENCE		
Midwest Division		
Dallas	35	9
San Antonio	29	16
Minnesota	27	18
Utah	27	18
Houston	24	20
Memphis	13	31
Denver	10	35
Pacific Division		
Sacramento	32	14
Portland	28	16
Phoenix	26	21
L.A. Lakers	20	23
Seattle	20	23
Golden State	20	24
L.A. Clippers	17	28

NBA STANDINGS		
EASTERN CONFERENCE		
Atlantic Division		
Orlando	2	0
New Jersey	1	0
Philadelphia	1	1
Boston	0	1
Miami	0	1
New York	0	1
Washington	0	1
Central Division		
Chicago	1	0
Detroit	1	0
Indiana	1	0
Toronto	1	0
New Orleans	0	0
Atlanta	0	1
Cleveland	0	1
Milwaukee	0	1
WESTERN CONFERENCE		
Midwest Division		
Dallas	1	0
Minnesota	1	0
San Antonio	1	0
Utah	0	0
Denver	0	1
Houston	0	1
Memphis	0	1
Pacific Division		
Sacramento	1	0
Portland	1	0
Golden State	0	0
L.A. Clippers	0	0
Phoenix	0	0
Seattle	0	0
L.A. Lakers	0	2
Wednesday's Games		
Chicago 99, Boston 96		
Indiana 91, Houston 82		
Toronto 74, Washington 68		
Philadelphia 95, Milwaukee 93		
Orlando 100, Miami 86		
New Jersey 105, Atlanta 94		
Dallas 119, Memphis 108		
Minnesota 83, Denver 77		
Detroit 86, New York 77		
Portland 102, L.A. Lakers 90		

Team	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	T
Giants	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	-	3	
Hustlers	1	0	1	4	2	0	0	5	-	13









**SPORTS BRIEFS**



**Spurs defeat Mavericks, 111-104**

Tony Parker scored a career-high 32 points, including seven free throws in the final minute, to lead the San Antonio Spurs to a 111-104 win over the division rival Dallas Mavericks on Wednesday night.

48

Saipan Tribune  
**Sports**

**Yearend RGA champion tourney tomorrow**

The Refaluwasch Golf Association will hold their yearend Club Champion Tournament tomorrow, December 14, at the Lao Lao West golf course.

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